

Transnational Migration, Diaspora and Religion:  
Inscribing Identity through the Sacred (the Filipino  
Diaspora in New Zealand and Singapore)

---

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

By Josefina Socorro Flores Tondo

Social and Political Sciences

University of Canterbury

2012

---

## Table of Contents

### Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction: mobility, migration and diaspora .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Diaspora historical context and development .....	11
Thesis objectives and goals .....	20
Thesis organisation plan .....	25
<b>Chapter One: Exploring Filipino <i>fiesta</i> celebrations Overseas .....</b>	<b>29</b>
Introduction .....	29
The discourse on Filipino migration and diaspora .....	31
Conceptual framework on migration and diaspora .....	41
1) Various kinds of migrants and transnational communities exist .....	43
2) Some migration flows are explained by social network theories of migration .....	45
3) Mobile peoples transplant, adapt and develop cultural practices as they settle .....	50
4) Migrant diaspora practices are representations of the homeland's historical context .....	52
5) Migration and diaspora challenge long held notions of identity and place .....	53
6) Some migration processes are influenced and supported by cultural dispositions .....	56
7) Diasporas construct identity through ritual performance and homeland symbols as a home and place-making activity .....	57
Methodology: an ethnography of the 'natives' away from 'native land' .....	61
<b>Chapter 2: The Philippines: A Migrant Nation .....</b>	<b>71</b>
Introduction .....	71
Important facts about the Philippines .....	72
Historical development of Filipino Migration .....	75
Filipino migration to New Zealand and Singapore .....	81
New Zealand: history, migration and biculturalism .....	82
New Zealand - Philippines relations .....	84
New Zealand immigration policy .....	87

Filipinos in New Zealand .....	91
Singapore: history and development .....	93
Singapore immigration policy .....	95
Singapore - Philippines relations and the Flor Contemplacion saga .....	101
Filipino migration to Singapore .....	103
Migration, the Philippine economy and migrant stereotypes .....	105
<b>Chapter 3: Colonial history, Catholicism and local cultures.....</b>	<b>108</b>
Introduction: beginning with the present .....	108
Exploring the genesis of the Philippine Islands and people .....	111
Western "discovery" of the archipelago .....	119
Colonisation and Catholicism in the islands .....	121
The <i>principalia</i> , <i>reduccion</i> and the <i>pueblo</i> (town) <i>fiestas</i> .....	122
Colonial economic transitions .....	126
Friar ascendancy in colonial structures and institutions .....	129
Widening the composition of the elite class .....	131
Contesting realms in the <i>pueblo</i> .....	135
U.S. colonial administration .....	144
Summary and conclusion .....	151
<b>Chapter 4: The Filipino family and Folk religious traditions .....</b>	<b>153</b>
Introduction .....	153
Filipino lowland cosmology and folk Christianity .....	156
Filipino family and sacred icons .....	170
Popular devotions and the <i>fiesta</i> .....	173
Filipino lowland cosmology and the <i>fiesta</i> ritual .....	185
1) <i>Santacruzán</i> .....	192
2) <i>Ati-atihan fiesta</i> .....	196
3) <i>Sinulog fiesta</i> .....	198
4) <i>Simbang Gabi</i> novena masses .....	202
Ritual and key symbols .....	205
Summary and conclusion .....	212
<b>Chapter 5: Filipinos in New Zealand.....</b>	<b>215</b>
Introduction .....	215
Diasporic beginnings: appropriating the NZ "barbie" .....	218
Cultural encounters: living with difference .....	227
Diaspora growth .....	232
Filipino identifying characteristics and group identities .....	239
Filipino transnational migration and the family .....	243
The 'Pinoy' identity, family, regionalism and class distinction .....	246

Folk Christianity, agency, luck ( <i>swerte</i> ) and destiny ( <i>kapalaran</i> ) .....	252
Homeland remembrance and home 'reconstruction' through the sacred ...	258
Religious icons and the Filipino home and culture .....	262
Diasporic inclusion and exclusion in the Church and public space .....	266
Summary and conclusion .....	274

## **Chapter 6: The *Santacruz* and *Santo Niño-Sinulog Fiesta* in NZ .....279**

Introduction .....	279
Filipino community gathering and <i>fiestas</i> .....	286
<i>Santacruz</i> and <i>Flores de Mayo</i> in Christchurch and Auckland .....	288
<i>Santo Niño-Sinulog Fiesta</i> in Christchurch: the icon and the bride .....	304
<i>Santo Niño-Sinulog Fiesta</i> in Auckland .....	314
Nine-day Novena Masses before the <i>fiesta</i> .....	317
<i>Fiesta</i> Day liturgy ritual .....	324
Sacred - secular connections .....	333
Summary and conclusion .....	341

## **Chapter 7: Filipinos in Singapore, the Lion City of Asia .....350**

Introduction .....	350
Migrant social networks and religious spaces .....	353
Social capital, family and folk Christianity .....	358
1) Uniqueness of destiny .....	360
2) God's plan and human cooperation .....	362
3) A sister's familial duty .....	363
4) Transnational family and belonging .....	365
5) Filipino family values and religious icons .....	367
6) Just a day for church and prayer .....	370
7) Domination, astuteness and prayer .....	371
8) The unlucky ones .....	373
9) Boundary crossings: from Singapore to New Zealand .....	375
Summary and conclusion .....	379

## **Chapter 8 Christian Churches and Lucky Plaza .....382**

Introduction .....	382
Christian churches and migrant care: programmes and interventions .....	386
Church-based migrant circles and church spaces .....	390
Lucky Plaza as "Little Philippines" .....	397
From the sacred to the secular: Church to Lucky Plaza .....	405
Boundaries of distinction: contesting space and representation .....	407
Summary and conclusion .....	418

<b>Chapter 9 Inscribing Filipino identity in Singapore .....</b>	<b>426</b>
Introduction .....	426
<i>Simbang Gabi/Misa de Gallo</i> fiesta in Singapore .....	430
Filipino Christmas symbols: the <i>belen</i> , <i>parol</i> and the Filipino home .....	434
Contestation and spatial positioning in the <i>Simbang Gabi</i> .....	443
Food commensality in the <i>Simbang Gabi</i> .....	458
Summary and conclusion .....	463
<b>Chapter 10 Summary and conclusion .....</b>	<b>471</b>
An interpretive approach to religion, migration and diaspora .....	471
What the thesis affirms .....	474
Native ethnography as contribution and limitation .....	476
Key insights and contribution to migration and diaspora discourse .....	480
Research limitations and directions for future explorations .....	485
Conclusion .....	487
<b>Cited Bibliography .....</b>	<b>493</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>568</b>
Appendix A: Santacruzán procession characters .....	568
Appendix B: Original text of cited migrant narratives .....	570
Appendix C: Summary of New Zealand/Singapore migrant context .....	578

## Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Patrick McAllister, my main supervisor, for his competent supervision and guidance in the ethnographic analysis and theoretical discussions, especially on ritual and performance. I also express my deep thanks to Pnina Werbner, my external supervisor, for her competent supervision and guidance in the ethnographic analysis and theoretical discussions, especially on transnational migration and diaspora. I am grateful to Martin Fuchs for facilitating my admission to the University of Canterbury, and his supervision in my research proposal writing and fieldwork from 2007 to 2009. I thank Zhifang Song for joining the supervisory team in 2010 and his significant contribution to the structure and organisation of the thesis. I thank the anthropology faculty, Piers Locke, Richard Vokes and Aditya Malik, for the opportunity of teaching/tutoring in their courses. My appreciation to the sociology faculty, Allison Loveridge, Greg Newbold, Mike Grimshaw, Anne Scott, Rosemary DuPlessis, Nabila Jaber, Terry Austrin, Camilla Obel, Ruth McManus and Lyndon Fraser, for their supportive disposition towards postgraduate students. I am also grateful to the University of Canterbury for the 2007 UC Doctoral Scholarship grant.

I also extend a big thanks to the Anthropology/Sociology postgraduate community, especially to the Thesis Writers Group, for the academic

camaraderie during the different stages of my PhD journey. My special thanks to Kathy Harrington-Watt for her collegial empathy. I also thank the non-academic staff: Denise Forbes, Rochelle Bloy and Margaret Hawke; the library staff, especially, Patricia Jordan, Tim O’Sullivan; the interloans staff; and the ICT Service staff for their efficient and gracious logistical support.

I am deeply grateful to the various Filipino communities in New Zealand (Christchurch, Temuka, Geraldine and Auckland) and Singapore. I especially thank the Filipino Chaplaincy in Auckland, Christchurch and Singapore, and the organizers of the *Santacruzán*, *Sinulog* and *Simbang Gabi* for their support and cooperation during my fieldwork. I am grateful to the sisters of the Religious of the Good Shepherd for their assistance and support in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh and Sabah.

My special thanks to all the contact persons in my fieldwork in Christchurch and Auckland. I also thank those who assisted in my fieldwork in Singapore (Jacinta Cardoza and Domingo Ramos) and Malaysia (Bernie Chow, Cheryl Lee, Joanne Lee Geek Lang and Agnes Ngai). I thank Alina Ranee for her proof reading.

While regretfully, the thesis does not include the ethnography on Malaysia, I remain grateful for the fieldwork experience and thank the various FBOs

(Faith Based Organizations) and NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) working for migrants in Kuala Lumpur, especially the Pusat Kebajikan Good Shepherd; Tenaganita and the organisers of the 2010 NIEW International Conference on the Health & Wellbeing of Displaced Women for allowing me to participate in their seminar workshops on the state of migrants in Malaysia and the world. I thank the Filipino migrant organisations in Kuala Lumpur such as Legion of Mary, *Tahanang Pilipino*, Couples for Christ and *El Shaddai*-KL, for their hospitality to this co-Filipino researcher.

I thank my mentors who helped shape my research approach: Amor Pedro and Regina Estoquia (deceased) of the University of Santo Tomas-Social Research Centre (UST-SRC) for their collaboration in my first community-based research; and Mina Ramirez for her inspirational combination of academic work and social engagement. I am also grateful to Sr. M. Trinidad Oliva's (OSB) compassionate presence and unconditional acceptance in my youth which resulted in my collaborative work with the poor, in the Philippines and in Kenya, East Africa.

I also acknowledge my 'personal' network. I thank Ms. Victoria Faicol, Nina Robledo, Carmen Bersuela, and Loida Beldad for their friendly e-mails and texts; Tracy Cooke, Nicole and Dave Coufal and Yusti Gunther for the meal fellowships; Loida and Noah Lopez, Connie and Edwin Flores, Jema and



Gerry Nartea, Gemma and Dominic Fronda, Len and Rose Redoblado, Arlene and Bernard Wilkins, Sol and Tim O’Sullivan, Jo and Allan Pollon, Vans and Romulus Reyes, Cita and Noel Descalzo, Beth and Ray Trenuela, Jinky and Mike Knowles, Marie Pollisco, Cel and Ed Dijamco, Jay Lyn and Jeff Gurrea, Lucil and Ding Torres, Lala and Jess Diamoy, Lilian and Jeff Greaves, Jervi and Stan Cooper, Daday and Locloc Campilan, Sr. Felisa, Manang Dicdic, Connie Elliot, Cynthia Kleinbecher, Jean Hamilton, Tati Corpuz, Liza Manumbas-Solidum, Dely Richards, Alex Tan, and Ana Alcruz-Rabczuk for their hospitality; and Carla Borkus, my flatmate, for her supportive empathy.

I am most indebted to Theresa Symons, PKGS Executive Director, for her invaluable contribution as guide, confidante, and “bouncing board” during my fieldwork in Malaysia and Singapore and the whole duration of writing this thesis.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to my parents (both deceased), Nanay (Victoriana Flores-Tondo), Tatay (Basilio R. Tondo Sr.) and my only sister (deceased) Ate Gene (Genara Flores-Tondo Siasico), for being my source of inspiration and moral support through the years. I also thank my brothers, Kuya Cezar (Cezar Elpidio Flores Tondo), Junting (Basilio Flores Tondo Jr.) and Boyet (Antonio Juan Saturnino Flores Tondo) for their sibling companionship and encouragement.

### Abstract

The thesis is an anthropological exploration of the role of religion in Filipino transnational migration and diaspora. The thesis takes the interpretive approach, drawing from a variety of disciplines such as religious studies, sociology, and geography to frame a holistic view of religion as a “lived” experience that connects religious dispositions, symbols and ritual performance to the diaspora’s place-making and home-making. It weaves together anthropology’s conceptual strands of space, place, symbols and ritual to present a view of Filipino migrant sociality and personhood not as constituted by disparate fragmented experiences but as as a tapestry of woven symbols and meanings that shape their diasporic life, even as they themselves continuously shape their own experiences.

The thesis’ ethnography is based on participant observation among Filipino migrants between 2007 and 2010 in New Zealand and Singapore. It focuses on the celebration of the *Santacruzán* and *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta* in New Zealand and *Simbang Gabi* novena masses in Singapore to examine how Filipino cultural forms of expression connect and mix with notions of homeland, family, home, sacred domain and identity as these have been adapted, recreated, and spatially inscribed in their transnational journeys.

The ethnography examines the interplay and connection between Filipino folk religiosity, family and social networks. It looks at how the deeply held folk Christian notions of *kapalaran* (destiny), *swerte* (luck), *bahala na* (whatever God allows will happen /come what may God will take care) and imagery of *may awa ang Diyos* (a compassionate God) are enmeshed in the migrant exercise of agency, reflexive discourse, risk-taking, resilience and meaning-making in the diaspora. It demonstrates that among Filipino migrants, material and communication flows are manifestations of religious dispositions that support enduring family commitment and reciprocity. It shows that financial and social capital provided by families and social networks for migrants are supported by prayers for sacred assistance and blessings, indicating that the Filipino migrants' exercise of agency is familial and sacral rather than individual and secular.

As a dominant Philippine lowland tradition, the *fiesta* is the locus of sacral-material linkages constituted by Filipino home symbols, such as sacred icons, costumes, cultural performance, semantic expressions, and food. By examining the *fiesta*, its organisation and structure of power relations, the thesis explores the metaphoric parallels and symbolic articulations between two homes in migrants' diasporic consciousness, and the significant role of sacred symbols in aiding and facilitating the maintenance and inscription of

‘Filipino’ identity in a foreign land. Diaspora identity is a socially and spatially inscribed identity. For Filipinos, it is inscribed through sacred icons and *fiesta* celebrations in sacred sites.

## Introduction

### Mobility, migration, and diaspora

*[M]obility, like birth and death, is a demographic universal.*

Eades (1987)

*We're wanderers - always have been. It goes back to upright posture and our ability to outwalk our relatives.*

Wallach (2005)

*[M]otion is part of the normal round for many groups, ranging from Bushmen and Australian aborigines, to Central Asian nomads and Southeast Asian swidden agriculturalists.*

Appadurai (1988)

Migration has been a moving force behind diversity and major social transformations in human history. Diversity as we know it now is a result of thousands of years of human migratory movements. Ancient migration and settlement is linked to human evolution (Stone and Lurquin 2007; Stringer and Andrews 2005) and foundational to linguistic and cultural diversity (Ehret 2010). The peopling of the world then, and the diversity of contemporary migrant communities living in most urban centres of the world (Smith 1995) point to the significance of translocal, international or overseas migration. The reasons, circumstances, and means of the journey may change but migration continues. If, according to Hannerz (2010), anthropology's primary concern is human diversity, then migration is arguably foundational to the discipline.

Contemporary interest in migration is due more to its increasing volume<sup>1</sup> rather than its novelty. Migrant labour is a significant part of contemporary transnational migration. Over the last five decades, there has been a rapid increase in the population of migrant diasporas in Europe, North America, Middle East and Asia. Diaspora communities include migrants who have become residents and citizens, as well as contractual labourers.

Filipino migrants constitute a significant part of the global transnational movement, and are considered one of the largest labour diasporas in the world.<sup>2</sup> Of particular note are thriving Filipino communities in East Asia (China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan); Europe (Rome and Italy more generally, Spain, Portugal, France, the UK, Germany, Holland); the Middle East (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Israel, Lebanon); North America (Canada, the U.S.); Oceania (Australia, New Zealand); and South East Asia (Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand). Among these, the Filipinos in New Zealand and Singapore are the ethnographic subjects of this thesis.

---

<sup>1</sup> In 1960, there were 76 million international migrants. Four decades later, in 2002, it has risen to 175 million (UN International Migration Report 2002 - UN IMR henceforth). In 2005, international migrants increased to 191 million (UN IMR 2006) and in just four years in 2009 it was estimated at 214 million (Human Development Report 2009 United Nations Development Programme henceforth UNDP report, p. 21). The number of transnational migrants increased by a hundred million in 42 years, 115 million in 46 years and 138 million in fifty years. Diaspora communities include both temporary contractual labour and migrants who have become residents.

<sup>2</sup> Conservative estimates in 2010 place Filipino migrants at 9,452,984 million (Commission on Overseas Filipinos Stock Estimate of Filipinos Overseas, henceforth CFO) or more than ten per cent of its 90 million population, dispersed in 193 countries.

Geographically mobile migrants have displayed remarkable adaptability and capacity to settle and put down roots away from home. Diaspora is as much about re-grounding as it is about uprooting (Ahmed, Castañeda, Fortier and Sheller 2003); as much about reterritorialisation as it is about de-territorialisation (Appadurai 2003); and as much about emplacement as it is about displacement (Sørensen 1997). In this sense, members of diasporas occupy an in-between state: of being connected and oriented towards past and present, here and there, the homeland and the new home, both of continuing relevance to their quotidian existence and identity. The state of in-betweenness is one sense of Homi K. Bhabha's 'third space' (Bhabha 1994) or dual consciousness (Dayal 1996), both key features of diaspora living. Tölölyan (2007, p. 650) explains,

Diasporicity manifests itself in relations of difference. The diasporic community sees itself as linked to but different from those among whom it has settled; eventually, it also comes to see itself as powerfully linked to, but in some ways different from, the people in the homeland as well.

Diaspora 'space' can be grasped both as a metaphor and a spatial attribute. It is constructed when a community gathers and homeland memories are nostalgically remembered and affectively performed. Among Filipino migrants, as will be shown in the ethnography, remembrance and performance occur in the religious sphere. The thesis follows their performance of identity in the sacred spaces they create and inscribe in New Zealand and Singapore.

### **Diaspora: historical context and development**

The term diaspora has religious connotations, classically epitomised by the Jewish dispersal and exile among various nations (Safran 1991).<sup>3</sup> According to Baumann (2000, p. 320) early Christianity appropriated the term diaspora to denote a pilgrim people of God, which during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation was used to denote the geographic and social signifiers distinguishing between majority-minority positions of Catholics and Protestants, to define territorial and socio-cultural boundaries. Up until the 1960s, the term was limited to the Jewish and Christian usages.

Diaspora discourse slowly became secularized as it was increasingly applied to the postwar migrant communities in Europe and North America. Both Tölölyan (2007 p. 648) and Baumann (2000, p. 321) attribute the semantic expansion of the term to George Shepperson's (1966) inclusion of the African diaspora in reference to sub-Saharan Africans' dispersion to the Americas through the colonial slave trade. In recent times diaspora has become a "blanket term" for most ethnic groups leaving their homeland out of necessity (Hassiotis 2004, p. 95). Clifford (1994, p. 310) notes:

The language of diaspora is increasingly invoked by displaced peoples who feel (maintain, revive, invent) a connection with a prior home. This sense of connection must be strong enough to

---

<sup>3</sup> See also Baumann (2004); Brubaker (2005); Reiss (2004); Vertovec (1999a).



resist erasure through the normalizing processes of forgetting, assimilating, and distancing.

The concept of diaspora shifted from the Jewish connotation of a nationless (or homeless) dispersed religious people, to be appropriated by those whom Brah (1996, pp. 192-193) refers to as migrant communities experiencing “creative tension” between “home and dispersion.”

Diaspora discourse thus expanded to take a more inclusive view of various overseas communities and their connection to their ‘homelands’ in terms of their ongoing social relations and material flows.<sup>4</sup> The increasing number and diversity of emergent overseas communities in recent times has prompted some efforts at classifying diasporas in terms of their origins and the context of dispersal. Reiss (2004, pp. 41-42) suggests a three-wave historical framework to distinguish the historical contexts of diasporas: 1) the Classical Period; 2) the Modern Period, from 1500 to 1945; and 3) the Contemporary or Late-Modern Period, from post WWII to the present. This illuminates the particularity and uniqueness of each diaspora by framing what Brah (1996, p. 183) refers to as the text of “distinctive ... and disparate narratives” of the “diasporic journey.” Thus the diasporic expression of identity varies

---

<sup>4</sup> See Baumann (2000); Brettel (2006); Cohen and Gold (1997); Christou (2006); Clifford (1994); Lee (2004); Levitt (1998); Poirine (2006); Safran (2004, 1991); Shuval (2003); Tsagarousiano (2004); Vertovec (2000); Wahlbeck (1998); Werbner (2000).

somewhat from place to place, even among the same ethno-national groups, though there are shared narratives as well.

Diverse diaspora classifications have emerged over time: for example ‘race-based’ diasporas such as the African or black diasporas in the Americas and Caribbean who claim an origin in a whole continent; ethno-cultural diasporas originating from particular nations; ethno-religious diasporas; gender diasporas (women, gays and lesbians); internet diasporas; labour diasporas; refugee diasporas; and religious diasporas (Brodwin 2003; Brubaker 2005; Cohen 1997; Wahlbeck 2002; Yelvington 2001). Part of the complexity of diaspora studies is that diaspora identities may overlap in terms of regional identities, for example the Afro-American or South Asian diasporas, and national-ethnic identities, for example, Senegalese-American, Nigerian-American and Somali-American diasporas (Lahneman 2005). Thus Werbner (2004) speaks of ‘segmented’ or ‘complex’ diasporas of groups with different national and religious identities originating from a single cultural region. Religious identities also overlap with or cut across national identities in some diasporas, for example, the Indian-Hindus or Indian-Muslims, and ethnic identities are joined with national identities to form hyphenated identities, for example, Filipino diasporans refer to themselves in diverse ways, as Filipino-

Americans, Filipino-Germans, Filipino-Spanish, Filipino-French, Filipino-Italians, or Filipino-New Zealanders.

The spatial visibility of various diasporic groups in migrant receiving and hosting countries is one way that space enters into the discourse on diaspora. Gupta (1997, pp. 179-80) encourages us to “investigate processes of place making, of how feelings of belonging to an imagined community bind identity to spatial location ...” Blunt (2007, p. 690) notes that the “cultural geographies of diaspora encompass the material and imaginative connections between people and a ‘territorial identity’... over transnational space and via transnational networks.” A diaspora is positioned between the local and the global, centre and periphery, and thus locating it in space is crucial for studying social relations among peoples, communities and groups. Their cultural praxis, identity construction or spatial inscription, have led to significant interdisciplinary conversations.<sup>5</sup>

Spatial convergence and clustering among ethnic, diasporic and transnational communities commonly referred to as diasporic enclaves (Brodwin 2003) or ethnic or migrant enclaves have been a common feature of migration. These

---

<sup>5</sup> See Clifford (1997); Cohen (2007); Crain (1997); Ferguson (2001, 1997); Fernandez (2003); Friedman (2001); Gupta and Ferguson (1997a, 1992); Hannerz (2001, 1996); Inda and Rosaldo (2001); Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1994); Lovell (1998a, b); Richardson (2003); Rodman (2003); Rose (1995); Tuan (1977, 1975)

include residential enclaves,<sup>6</sup> ones based on employment or economic clustering (Clark and Drinkwater 2002; Edin, Fredriksson and Aslund 2003; Wilson and Portes 1980; Zhou and Logan 1989) and entrepreneurial pursuits that create business networks, clusters and hubs (Logan, Alba and Stoultz 2003; Werbner 2001; Wilson and Martin 1982). Diaspora enclaves have also often been of religious or linguistic communities (Bauer, Epstein and Gang 2005; Chiswick and Miller 2002). Such enclaved groups foster a sense of identification and belonging in a foreign land (Benson 2010; Sidanius et al. 2004).

Migrant enclaves, understood as spatial clustering of migrants in particular spaces and places, are of particular interest in this thesis. Filipino migrants cluster and inscribe their diaspora identities in particular places in New Zealand and in Singapore mostly during the weekend. These weekend enclaves are formed through weekend community gatherings, rituals and social interactions. The ethnographic discussions show how important such spaces are to diasporic identity expression and performance, and their role in boundary maintenance and distinction between Filipino migrants and host societies.

---

<sup>6</sup> See Johnston, Forrest and Poulsen (2002); Poulsen, Johnston and Forrest (2002); Walks and Bourne (2006)

Aside from demarcated diasporic spaces, existing connections of food to identity, social relations, systems, and structures are important dimensions of anthropological discourse.<sup>7</sup> Various studies<sup>8</sup> of diasporic enclaves or hubs establish the way that food and foodways are central to the diasporic day-to-day experience and its economy. Food also plays an important role in diasporic religious festivals (Avieli 2005). In his study of the Lebanese migrant community in Sydney, Australia, Hage (1997) highlighted the role of food in the community's efforts at home-making. This is of particular significance in this thesis because, like space, food and foodways have been consistently present in all Filipino clusters, major community homeland rituals and gatherings in New Zealand and Singapore. Food and meal commensality, therefore, are important in the discussion of the Filipino migrant home-making and place-making.

Werbner (2000, p. 5-6) pointed out two important academic points of consensus that are of particular importance to this thesis: a) the social heterogeneity of diasporas, meaning the recognition of social divisions within the diaspora as a social formation; and b) diasporas as historical formations in

---

<sup>7</sup> See Douglas (1972); Harris (1987); Henderson (2007); James, A. (1997); James, R. (2004); Mintz and Bois (2002); Sutton (2001)

<sup>8</sup> See Beardsworth and Keil (1992); Crouch and O'Neil (2000); De la Peña and Lawrance (2011); Edwards (2011); Gardaphe and Xu (2007); Harbottle ([2000] 2004); Johnson, Hallberg and Gustafsson (2002); Kalčík (1984); Koc and Welsh (2001); Kravva (2001); Latshaw (2009); Marte (2008); Sinnreich (2007); Tuomainen (2009). Food is also linked to diasporic 'home' memories [see Dawkins (2009); Forero and Smith (2010); James (2004); Mintz (2008); Ray (2004); Sealey-Ruiz (2009); Williams (2007)]

process, meaning the diasporas' hybridity and heterogeneity are in most cases historically determined and change over time. The Filipino diasporic communities in New Zealand and Singapore, as will be shown by the ethnographic chapters, are heterogenous and evolving.

Werbner (2005, p. 545) suggests that diasporas have combined the binaries of chaos and order in their movements and expansion. She coins the word 'chaorders' to indicate a seemingly paradoxical state. On one hand diasporas are social formations that follow "a predictable process that replicates itself transnationally," wherever they settle; at the same time they are unpredictable and uncontrollable by any centralised authority in the forms and expressions they assume. This notion helps in understanding the similarities in a diaspora's multiple sites in the world and explains why, while massive migration predictably spells the formation of diaspora communities and their particular ways of mobilising, the forms of a diaspora's expressions and engagement with the local culture are nevertheless also uncharted and unpredictable. The chaordic characteristic of the diaspora rests on its de-territorialised state; connected to but independent of the home country; a part of but distinct from the host society; and (in the case of Catholic diasporas), belonging to a global institutional religion but practising distinct local rituals. The lack of institutional control from the homeland and settlement enables migrant

communities to function with relative independence. This position helps explain diasporic “cultural-organizational forms” as migrants selectively and purposively re-articulate and re-interpret homeland traditions and religious rituals through diaspora performance in the new places of settlements free from centralised institutional dictates or interference.<sup>9</sup> Filipino religious rituals in New Zealand and Singapore, as shown in Chapters Six and Nine, are lay-initiated and maintained. They are therefore mostly free of institutional control from the Church and state, even if both support and participate in the *fiesta* rituals.

The main contribution of the thesis is to an understanding of religion in Filipino diaspora community formation. In general, while there are passing observations about religion in the discourse of Filipino transnationalism and diaspora, only a limited scholarly literature discusses the connection and significance of religious symbolic representations, practices and rituals to contemporary Filipino migrant communities.<sup>10</sup> This may be explained partly by the unrelenting focus in migration studies on the political economy, but mainly by what Ebaugh (2002, p. 387) critiques as a general acceptance among social science researchers that “secularization inevitably accompanies

---

<sup>9</sup> See also Werbner (2007; 2002a)

<sup>10</sup> Claudia Liebelt is an exception (see Liebelt 2010). More generally it may be said that scholars’ interest in diaspora Muslim religiosity since 9/11 has become almost an obsession.

modernization.” Berger (2001, p. 445) challenges modernity’s secular assumption by stating, “The world is as religious as it has ever been and in some places more religious than ever.”<sup>11</sup> He also argues that modernity does not lead to religion’s demise but “to a pluralist religious market” wherein “many religious communities coexist in the same social space” (Berger 2005, p. 114). In effect religion is not taken for granted but becomes the object of people’s reflection and choice. Observable migrant religiosity and practices, and the important role sacred places such as churches, temples, synagogues, and mosques play among migrant diasporic communities compounds the challenge (Warner 1998).

Remembrance of their kinship systems, social structures, cultural practices and religious tradition all play a significant role in the process of settlement and migrant diasporic identification. Migrants carry deeply sedimented homeland memories and their retrieval, reconstruction and reinterpretation are selectively dependent on their significance to the context of settlement, and most of the time is independent of institutional or state control.

Distinctions of diasporic forms of expressions will be particularly highlighted in the ethnographic account of Filipino diasporic communities in New Zealand

---

<sup>11</sup> The notable exception is Western Europe.



and Singapore. In the ethnographic chapters (Chapters Five, Six, Seven, Eight and Nine), 'Filipino identity' is interpreted and expressed through selective and distinct cultural praxes and performed rituals in diaspora spaces/localities covered in the thesis.

### **Thesis objectives and goals**

The significance of religion to diaspora studies is the central topic of the thesis. It can be seen in the migrants' reliance on religious institutions in the migration process (Hagan and Ebaugh 2003) and attachment to religion as heritage, its role in community building, networks, social relations and ethnic identity (Baumann 2004; Chong 1998; Chen 2002; Levitt 1998a). Various diasporas draw their identity and distinction through the public performance of rituals. Some relevant studies exploring various diasporic religious practices and forms of migrant identity expression in settlement or host societies include Orsi's (1985) ethnography of the Italian immigrants in New York, Tweed's (1997) study of Cuban migrant exiles in Florida, Paerregard's (2008, 2005) study of the Peruvian immigrants in the United States, Spain, Italy, Argentina and Japan, and Werbner's (2003, 2002, 1990/2002) study of Pakistani migrants in the United Kingdom.<sup>12</sup> Their attention to the diasporas' affective

---

<sup>12</sup> Immigrant groups in the U. S. are the most studied. The book, "Gatherings in Diaspora" published in 1998 offers a compilation of studies on various immigrant groups associated with diverse religious practices, such as the Hindus (Kurien 1998), Iranian Jews (Feher 1998), Mayans (Wellmeier 1998), Haitian Catholics

longing for the homeland expressed through sacred symbols and the migrant community's performance of religious rituals to transform spaces into secure domains for the communities advances better understanding of the role of religion in migrant diasporic life. They also provide a framework for examining particular diaspora groups belonging to global religious institutions, such as the Catholic Church and Sufi Islam. Cao's (2005) reference to the church as a "surrogate family" finds resonance among Filipino migrants in New Zealand and Singapore. The role of religious icons in the performance of migrant community rituals and the notion of Church as "home" and surrogate family are of particular importance in the exploration of the role of religion in Filipino migration and diaspora as advanced in this thesis.

Despite the significance of religion in Filipino life, it has been generally left out in the discourse on Filipino migration though some studies have documented Filipino visibility in church spaces which are noted in Chapter One's review of literature.<sup>13</sup> Spanish colonialism's Catholic legacy has provided the most definitive influence in Filipino lowland cultures up to the present. Among Filipinos, religion as belief and practice are enmeshed in the community's social relations. While the historical, political and cultural

---

(McAlister 1998), Muslims in New York (Abusharaf 1998), Keralite (George 1998), Korean Protestants (Chai 1998), and Chinese Christians (Yang 1998).

<sup>13</sup> The special issue of *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 2010, (11)3-4 features some studies of Filipino religiosity in the migration context

importance of religion has often been mentioned, only a few studies have actually dealt with its impact on the Filipino people's lives.<sup>14</sup> Media and academic interest have mostly remained focused on economic factors, both local and international, triggering the massive transnational migration of Filipino workers and its social impact on the homeland (in terms of remittances), and family (in terms of absentee parents or children and spouses left behind). It is therefore not surprising that there is scant attention to religion in Filipino transnational migration and diaspora scholarly discourse.

Johnson and Werbner (2010, p. 208) suggest a move away from economic and political analysis in migration research in order to consider migrant "sociality and community building capacity in diaspora; their expanding rights and religious associations, evolving ritual practices, new friendships, changing normativities and the new convivial spaces carved out in the migration context." Following this approach, the thesis focuses on the role of religion and ritual observances in the process of home-making and incorporation of Filipinos in the urban and modern context of New Zealand and Singapore. I explore the role of religion in the two spheres of the Filipino transnational

---

<sup>14</sup> One of them, Pertierra's (1988) study of an Ilocano community in northern Philippines, provides good insight on the role of religion in a small town. See also Wiegele (2005)

movement: migration and diaspora settlement which are distinct concepts yet also interconnected phenomena.

One of the core elements constitutive of a diaspora is boundary maintenance wherein efforts are made to create a distinct identity set apart from host societies. As host societies provide migrant communities with their tolerated boundaries of assimilation and integration, migrants go through a process of group and community identity formation that establishes them as a distinct group within the host society and culture. This thesis looks at how a postcolonial diaspora such as the Filipino diaspora relates to the host societies of New Zealand and Singapore, and the chosen identity markers of distinction that it adopts.

Social memory is purposively selective. In terms of the Filipino diaspora, the lasting homeland memory is connected to family and hometown folk religious traditions. I argue in this thesis that religion is enmeshed in the transnational migration process and diaspora settlement among Filipinos in New Zealand and Singapore. Consequently, I pay attention to the social and religious context of transnational migration by showing that the Filipino migrants' exercise of agency is enmeshed and embedded in their social and religious relations. I take the position that the different forms of religious practices and

rituals performed by Filipinos in the two locations are, in one sense, as Clifford Geertz (1973) would formulate it, 'texts' which enable migrants to reflect on Filipino lowland cultures, and by extension the diaspora's cultural and historical attachments to the homeland. Thus, I argue that among Filipino diaspora communities in New Zealand and Singapore, Catholic rituals supply the key ingredients to diasporic constructions of identity: historical and social memory, food, space, iconic symbols, devotional ritual performance, and *fiesta* celebrations. I propose that religion as believed, practised and performed by Filipino migrants, individually and communally, provides a significant location in which to study the convergence of anthropology's diverse fields of theory and practice; religion, history, space and place, food, emotion, ritual and performance, migration and diaspora.

Diaspora scholars have repeatedly emphasized that diaspora communities may only be understood in the context of the homeland's historical evolution and the point of diasporic departure. The diaspora comes also to be connected to the historical context of the land of settlement, and the modes of accommodation or rejection the host society exhibits at certain points of its history. It is therefore important to remember that diasporic identities are not fixed but evolve through an interactive process, as will be shown in the

ethnographic chapters (see Chapters Five, Six, Seven, Eight, and Nine, pp. 215-470).

In aiming to show the intimate connection between religion and transnational migration and diaspora, I take the position that folk religious belief and an ethos of reciprocity have implications and consequences to the economy of migrant relations and material flows. I argue that the Filipino transnational migration and diaspora are enmeshed in a 'sacred economy' as manifested in a) religiously defined and motivated moral obligations underpinning social relations, b) human-divine affective relations as expressed through sacred icons, c) material flows related to the performance of religious rituals and practices, d) inscription of identity through culturally linked activities, and e) the sacralisation of space through ritual performance.

### **Thesis organisation**

The thesis is organised in the following order:

The Introduction discusses migration as foundational to human diversity, a major scholarly interest within anthropology, sociology and related disciplines. It also presents the conceptual development of diaspora. Chapter One presents

a review of available literature on Filipino transnational migration, methodology, and conceptual framework on migration and diaspora.

Chapter Two presents an overview of Philippine migration and its location within contemporary global migration. It foregrounds the historical factors that have given rise to the human and material flows from the Philippines in the on-going restructuring of the country's economic and political systems. Finally, it analyses the historical context of Filipino migration to New Zealand and Singapore.

Chapter Three reconstructs Philippine colonial history. It connects Spanish colonisation and Philippine Catholicism to the present day practices and rituals in the Filipino diaspora. It also explains the development of normative institutions such as family, social networks and the educational system and connects them to the overall trajectory of outmigration.

Chapter Four reviews Filipino indigenous and folk religious beliefs and practices. It examines the significance of myth and folklore in the evolution of Filipino folk Christianity. It connects *fiesta* ritual performance to Filipino notions of the sacred and its symbolic representations in sacred icons, aesthetics and social reciprocity that includes the supernatural realm. It draws

attention to Catholic popular devotions and rituals in Aklan and Cebu provinces in the Philippines and shows how creolised ritual practices there are carried forward into the Filipino diaspora.

Chapter Five and Six provide an ethnographic account of Filipinos in New Zealand. Chapter Five presents the historical background of Filipino migration to New Zealand and the development of the Filipino diasporic communities. It examines Filipinos' perceptions of a Filipino identity, which visibly include a sense of religiosity, and how such a disposition is applied to their quotidian positionings in various small circles in the diaspora. I draw attention to some migrant narrative accounts of their transnational journey and their devotional practices towards the sacred. I examine the manifestation of their attachment and affective regard for sacred icons in terms of ritualisation and iconic display.

Chapter Six looks at the spiritual resources that provide Filipino migrants guidance and support on their transnational journeys and meaning-making in a new home. It describes the major religious observances and occasions of the “*Santo Niño-Sinulog*” and *Santacruzán* for diaspora gatherings in Christchurch and Auckland. These, I argue, illustrate and emphasize the role and importance of history and folk religious traditions in identity maintenance, formation and



(re)construction among Filipino migrants. It shows the significant role of rituals in mediating homeland-diaspora connections of substance, and the multiple layers of identity and contestation these reveal.

Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine provide the ethnographic account of the Filipino diaspora in Singapore and Filipino migrants' forms of engagement in a highly modern and urbanised cosmopolitan city-state with a dominant Chinese population, the majority of whom are Buddhists. Chapter Seven draws attention to the folk Christian dispositions of Filipina migrants in Singapore and how it intertwines with their meaning-making processes. Chapter Eight shows the ways space is central to the diasporic construction of identity, boundary maintenance and intra-diaspora constestations. Chapter Nine follows the Filipinos' celebrations of Christmas and the popular religious ritual *Simbang Gabi*. It reveals the intricate relationship between the Catholic Church and the Philippine state within the ritual.

Chapter Ten, the concluding chapter, is a synthesis of this multi-sited ethnography which develops further the insights arising from the exploration of the role of religion in Filipino migration and diasporic community formations in New Zealand and Singapore.

## Chapter One

### Exploring Filipino *fiesta* celebrations overseas

#### Introduction

*Ritual translocation into the diaspora is not simply about ethnic boundary making processes. Rather, ritual as embodied practice effects cultural renewal and innovation, produces inversions of gender and generational authority, reconciles past with present and reconstitutes a sense of home and personal integrity in the face of rupture and disintegration.*

Johnson and Werbner (2010, p. 209)

The focus on Filipinos in my doctoral project was partly ‘accidental’. While migration and diaspora are my research interests, I was more interested in the Singaporeans and Malaysians I had decided to study as ethnographic subjects. However, two incidents during my first month in Christchurch changed the focus of my interest. The first significant incident occurred one Saturday night in January of 2007. I attended a Filipina’s birthday party wherein flyers about a Filipino event, the *Santo Niño*<sup>15</sup> *Sinulog*<sup>16</sup> *fiesta*<sup>17</sup> to be held on the third weekend of January at a social club were distributed among those present. At that time, as a newcomer, I was curious about almost anything. I went to the club that particular Saturday night just to find out more about what seemed to be an annual event among Filipinos in Christchurch. It was the *bisperas* or vespers (the day before the feast) celebration of the *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta*.

---

<sup>15</sup> *Santo Niño* is the Spanish masculine word for Holy Child or Infant

<sup>16</sup> *Sinulog* is an indigenous devotional dance to honour the *Santo Niño*. The dance consists of two-steps forward and one step backward, which is said to be patterned after the current of the river, called *sulog*, from where the name of the dance *Sinulog* is based.

<sup>17</sup> *Fiesta* is the Spanish word for feast and in this case refers to the celebration of the feast day of the Holy Child Jesus.

As I entered the auditorium, while I expected to see Filipinos, I was unprepared to see hundreds of them gathered inside the club. The place was decorated with bunting and balloons Filipino '*fiesta* style'. The programme was in full swing. There were songs and dances performed by enthusiastic performers and an appreciative *Cebuano*-speaking crowd. Wearing 'indigenous' costumes, a group of young Filipinas performed the *Sinulog* dance (the final programme number) to the cheering and urging of the Filipino audience. On the way back to my flat that night the irony of what had just happened struck me. I was in Christchurch, an unfamiliar foreign city, but the moment I entered the club, I found myself transported back to the Philippines in the midst of a hometown *fiesta*. The indigenous dance performance and the overall ambience inside the club blurred the geographical distance between the Philippines and New Zealand and for some moments the two were conflated and converged. From that moment, I was curious to find out what else Filipinos do, and why the *fiesta* remains important to them even when they are overseas.

The other incident happened during an outing. A friend referred me to a contact in Christchurch, George and his wife Mirriam, for a basic orientation of the city. The couple turned out to be very amiable, arranging regular weekend outings. On one such weekend, George handed me a newspaper with

the front page headline: “Kiwi values to be taught” pointing to the section identifying the Philippines as the second largest source of net long-term arrivals in New Zealand; from a previous Filipino annual arrival rate of 500 in 2005 to 2,600 in 2007 (Eaton 2007, p. 1). Then he wonderingly asked, “Why do they come?” Coming from a Southeast Asian born New Zealander, the question may be a bit ironic but it continues to be asked because of its relevance to New Zealand, host to diverse migrant communities that connect them to migrant sending countries such as the Philippines. But it is not just about relevance. I was also curious about why the Filipinos I saw that night stayed in Christchurch, and why they celebrate the *fiesta* overseas. I decided to fuse my interest in Singapore and Malaysia with my emerging interest in Filipino migration and diaspora. This thesis then started from a simple curiosity and a few questions about Filipino migrants and has since expanded into an anthropological exploration of the role of religion in Filipino migration and diaspora.

### **The discourse on Filipino migration and diaspora**

Discussion and analysis of Filipino migration is generally located within the paradigm of an interconnected world capitalist system where the interaction between the local (‘push factors’) and global context (‘pull factors’) continue allegedly to be of particular significance (Kline 2003; Law and Nadeau 1999;

Tyner and Donaldson 1999) for the high incidence of Filipino labour migration worldwide. A notable number of scholars emphasize and analyze the macro-structural aspects of international migration from the Philippines in terms of migrant demographics, economics and remittance impact.<sup>18</sup> Concerns over the departure of skilled Filipinos draw attention to the “brain drain” effect and its social impact on the Philippines as a developing economy itself in need of skilled workers to produce goods and services for its growing population (Lorenzo, Galvez-Tan, Icamina and Javier 2007; Perrin, Hagopian, Sales and Huang 2007).

Some scholars look at migrant sending communities and villages with a high prevalence of migration; for example, migrant sending villages in northern Philippines (Ilocos and Ifugao)<sup>19</sup> or a *Tagalog* migrant sending village in Batangas province south of Manila (Aguilar 2009). Two studies focus on Filipino migrants in-between contracts, as they come home for vacation and rest, before returning once again to overseas domestic work (Asis 2002, 2001; Constable 1999). The development of technology has also impacted on Filipino migration studies. A few scholars explore the Filipino diaspora’s

---

<sup>18</sup> See Alayon (2009); Alcid (2006); Asis (2011); Asis, Huang and Yeoh (2004); Battistella and Paganoni (1992); Bautista (2003); Camroux (2009); Carlos (2002); Cariño (1992); Claudia and Yang (2007); Francisco (2003); Go (2006); Gonzalez (1998); Martin (1993); Rodriguez and Tiongson (2001); San Juan (2000); Smith (1976); Songco (2009); Vasquez (1992); Velasco (2002)

<sup>19</sup> See Cabilao (1992); Escobar (1992); Pertierra (1992c); Pingol (1992); McKay (2006, 2004, 2003a)

construction of supraterritorial identity on the World Wide Web.<sup>20</sup> The issue of illegal migration and migrant human rights also commands some attention, with some focusing on Filipina victims of human trafficking<sup>21</sup> while others examine migration laws and policies in migrant receiving nation-states and the state of migrant rights implementation.<sup>22</sup>

A significant body of literature looks at Filipino communities in various locations, such as, Canada;<sup>23</sup> Hawaii;<sup>24</sup> Hong Kong (Constable 1999; McKay 2010), Japan;<sup>25</sup> San Francisco (Cuevas-Hewitt 2010); San Francisco and Honolulu (Gee et. al. 2006); Spain (Antolin (2002); the United States of America;<sup>26</sup> and the United Kingdom (Almirol 1979). One study takes a historical approach towards the Filipino global diaspora (Lawless 2005). Filipino migrant labour's increasing feminisation from the mid-1990s onwards is reflected in the attention given to gender and migration and its significance and impact on Philippine society.<sup>27</sup> The interest in gender extends

---

<sup>20</sup> See Cuevas-Hewitt (2010); Figer (2009); Ignacio (2005, 2000); Tyner and Kuhlke (2000)

<sup>21</sup> See Battistela and Asis (2003; Constable (2007); Parreñas (2006); Piper (2004); Piper and Uhlin (2002); Wong and Saat (2002); Yea (2005)

<sup>22</sup> See Alcid (2006); Chin (2003); Gibson, Law and McKay (2001); Gurowitz (2000); Lyons (2007, 2004); Piper (2005). Most migration studies draw attention to migrant overseas communities irrespective of migration policies. A few, however, for example, Madianou's and Miller's (2011a) study ignores community formations in countries that grant residence.

<sup>23</sup> See Barber (2000); Kelly (2007); Pratt (2003/04); Silva (2006)

<sup>24</sup> See Agbayani (1991); Aquino (2000); Okamura (1983)

<sup>25</sup> See Anderson (2005); Ball and Piper (2002)

<sup>26</sup> See Allen (1977); Espiritu (1996); Johnston, Henderson and North (2006); Liu, Ong and Rosenstein (1991); San Juan (2000)

<sup>27</sup> See Asis (2005, 2003); Barber (2008); Gibson, Law and McKay (2001); Ogaya (2004a, 2004b); Osteria (1994); Rodriguez (2005); Tyner (2004, 2000, 1999)

also to Filipino migrant sexuality, and sexual orientations. Some studies focus on racialised sexualities<sup>28</sup> or gender-based diasporas, for example, Filipino women diasporans (Barber 2000; Faier 2007; Pingol 2010, 2001); gay and lesbian diasporans (Fajardo 2007; Manalansan 2003); and the Filipina mail-order-bride diaspora (Del Rosario 2005).

Considerable interest has also been focused on health professionals, such as nurses, nursing aides and caregivers which comprise a significant part of Filipino overseas migration. Some studies pay attention to the plight of Filipina nurses and caregivers.<sup>29</sup> It is important to note that while most of the literature is about Filipina migrants, some scholars also pay attention to Filipino male migration in highly masculine professions such as seamen (McKay SC 2007a, b) and construction workers (Gibson and Graham 1986; Margold 2004, 1995). Comparisons between Filipino male and female migrants in terms of their contribution to family support have also been drawn (Asis 2003; Semyonov and Gorodzeisky 2005).

The vacuum that Filipina migration leaves in the home domestic space has drawn considerable interest. Various studies look at the effects of migration by

---

<sup>28</sup> See Hilsdon and Giridharan (2008); Constable (1997, 1996); Lan (2003)

<sup>29</sup> See Amrith (2010); Brush and Sochalski (2007); Buchan (2006); Connel (2004); Hawthorne (2001); Liebelt (2010); Panayiotopoulos (2005)

Filipino women who are also mothers to families and children left behind.<sup>30</sup> Others investigate the plight of immigrant children in diasporic communities (Wolf 1997). And still others pay attention to the effects of migration on familial relationships between overseas mothers and their children in the homeland<sup>31</sup> and within Filipino transnational families.<sup>32</sup> Some look at the effects of migration on traditional gender roles in the family (Porio 2007) when Filipino women assume the role of main economic providers (Pagaduan 2006; Pingol 2001; Tyner 2002).

Overall, two important aspects of Filipino migration have received more attention than the rest: Filipina brides and domestic workers. A significant number of studies analyse Filipina brides and the mail-order-brides<sup>33</sup> phenomenon.<sup>34</sup> These Filipina brides are of particular interest in this thesis because Filipino migration to New Zealand began with Filipina brides.

---

<sup>30</sup> See Battistella and Conaco (1998); Fresnoza-Flot (2009); Parreñas (2002, 2001a); Tyner (2002)

<sup>31</sup> See Asis, Huang and Yeoh (2004); Parreñas (2005, 2002); Madianou and Miller (2011b); Tseng and Fuligni (2000); Schulze (2004)

<sup>32</sup> See Parreñas (2005, 2002, 2001a); Huang, Yeoh and Lam (2008); Yea (2008); Yeoh, Graham and Boyle (2002); Zontini (2004)

<sup>33</sup> Some Filipinas married foreigners through the normal patterns of face-to-face courtship, engagement and marriage, thus the qualification of Filipina brides. The mail-order-bride is a (negative) reference for brides who were introduced to or got to know their foreign husbands through net dating sites and newspaper ads. The mail-order-bride is a western concept, drawn from the experience of white male settlers in the colonial settler societies sending for brides from the homeland. Mail-order-brides in New Zealand started among early settlers. The film, 'The Piano' which won 3 Oscars and worldwide critical acclaim, showed a Scotswoman sold into marriage by her father and her journey to New Zealand to meet and live with her settler husband.

<sup>34</sup> Foreign brides have drawn local attention (and constestations) and have been the subject of feminist interest and analysis [see Angeles and Sunanta (2007); Clark (2004); Constable (2006, 2003); Faier (2007); Lauser (2008, 2006); Mallare (2006); McKay (2003); Del Rosario (2008, 2005); Rocas (2003); Satake (2004); Saroca (2006); Suzuki (2007, 2005, 2000); Simons (2001); Tibe-Bonifacio (2005); Tolentino (1996); Woelz-Stirling et al. (2000, 1998)]



Indeed two local Masters theses focus on New Zealand Filipina brides. Rich (1993) studied Kiwi husbands, while Ramos (2001) studied the matchmaking agencies facilitating mixed New Zealander-Filipina marriages.

Owing to their large numbers, much attention has been paid to Filipina domestic workers or DWs compared to other Filipino overseas migrants. They have been studied in various places such as Canada;<sup>35</sup> Hong Kong;<sup>36</sup> Israel (Liebelt 2011); Japan (Nakamatsu 2005); Kuwait (Shah et. al. (2002); Malaysia (Chin 2005, 2003, 1997); Qatar (Nagy 1998); Paris, France (Briones 2009); Rome, Italy (Magat 2004, 2007); Singapore<sup>37</sup> and Taiwan (Cheng 2004; Lan 2006, 2005, 2003a,b). A few comparative studies have been made between regions or locations, within Europe (Parreñas 2004); between Hong Kong and Singapore (Ogaya 2004a); Hong Kong and Japan (Andres 1984); Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan (Cheng 1996); Paris and Hong Kong (Briones 2008); Italy and Spain (Pe-Pua 2003); and within the United States (Parreñas 2001b). Domestic workers make up the majority of Filipino migrants in Singapore and therefore figure significantly in the ethnographic account of this thesis.

---

<sup>35</sup> See Barber (2008, 1997); McKay (2005); Pratt (1999)

<sup>36</sup> See Asato (2004); Briones (2008); Constable (2004, 1997a, b); French and Lam (1988); Ozeki (1997)

<sup>37</sup> See Iyer, Devasahayam and Yeoh (2004); Huang, Yeoh and Asis (2003); Yeoh and Huang (2000); Yeoh, Huang and Gonzales (1999); Wong (1996)

There have been attempts to understand the domestic space as a workplace and residential site for the Filipina domestic workers and its implications for their gender constructions and sexuality in places like Hong Kong (Constable (1997b, 1996) and Taiwan (Lan 2003b). McKay (2003b) finds that there is a connection between domestic work and the Filipina bride phenomenon in Canada, pointing out that the de-skilling effect of domestic work among Filipina domestic workers has induced a number of them to marry their Canadian employers.

Very few studies have focused on the Filipino diaspora's process of identity construction, in terms of performance, and its appropriation of social, religious and cultural markers of distinction. However, some studies offer favourable signposts towards these topics. The importance of religious space among Filipinos has been noted in places like Paris (Fresnoza-Flot 2010); Hong Kong (Cheng 1996); Israel (Liebelt 2011, 2010, 2008); Taiwan (Lan 2003a); Italy (Magat 2004, 2007); Italy and Spain (Pe-Pua 2003); Rome (Tacoli 1999); Singapore (Yeoh and Huang 1998) and New Zealand (Tondo 2010).

Some literature pays attention to Filipino notions of 'home' and homeland. In Singapore, Yeoh and Huang (1998, p. 598) make a passing comment about

Filipino attendance at “church services” before going to Lucky Plaza to be in “a familiar environment akin to home.” In effect, this observation links the Filipino ‘home’ with religion. In Hong Kong, Law (2001) pays attention to the significance of food and commensality among Filipina domestic workers and how they effectively transform the ambience of a Hong Kong public landscape into a Filipino home. In this sense, food and commensality is connected to the Filipino notions of home.

A few scholars have connected Filipino migration to religion. Gemma T. Cruz (2006) argues that faith is significantly woven in Filipina migrant lives by examining the ways by which religion helps them deal with the difficult and oppressive situations encountered in migration. Wan and Tira (2008) look at the connection between migration and the Christian mission. Angeles’ (2001) documentation of Filipino Catholic devotions performed by migrants in Philadelphia includes the *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta*. Nakonz and Shik (2009) pay attention to the religious coping strategies of Filipino migrants in Hong Kong. Mateo (2003, 2000) and Terada (2010) draw attention to the practice of Filipino religious traditions by Filipino migrants in Japan. Betsayda’s (2008) thesis looks at the folk religious practices among Filipinos in Toronto and how the Catholic Church helps in the socialization of second generation Filipinos in Canada. The citations of popular iconic

representations and devotions, with an actual documentation of a celebration of the *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta* of Filipino migrants in the US, contribute to the formation of a general picture of Filipino folk religious performance overseas and is therefore viewed with particular interest in this thesis. Popular devotional rituals in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the *Santo Niño* (Holy Child) are performed both in New Zealand and Singapore, the two sites of my study. My study provides a closer examination of the role of religion in the construction of Filipino migrant social networks of support and belonging in New Zealand and Singapore.

Tacoli's (1999) study of Filipino migrants in Rome also included non-economic aspects or cultural attachments. Two of her passing observations, first, that the Catholic church provides "a safety net for Filipino migrants" in Rome (p. 665), and second, that Filipino migration is a "socially embedded process" (p. 662) are explored in this thesis.

In a country such as the Philippines where folk/popular religious devotions and *fiesta* celebrations in honour of holy patron and saints abound, available literature on both folk/popular religiosity and *fiesta* in the Philippine lowlands is surprisingly scarce. Of the few studies, Cannell's (2005, 1999, 1995) ethnography of a Bicol village and the local population's devotion to

the icon *Amang hinulid*, provides a helpful exposition of Filipinos' affective relationship to their sacred icons. Pertierra's (1995) account of local contestations in the planning and celebration of the *fiesta* in a Philippine locality is helpful in understanding underlying divisions among migrant communities. Jocano's (1981, 1969) exploration of Filipino folk Christian practices in both the urban and rural areas in the Philippines provides a source of comparison (and affirmation) with my own observation of Filipino migrants' folk beliefs and practices. Lynch's ([1962] 2004) discourse on the *fiesta* provides a basic working definition of the Filipino *fiesta* and helps make sense of the *feria* (carnival) ambience among migrants in Singapore.

Despite frequent observations and reporting of *fiesta* celebrations among diaspora Filipino communities, I have not come across an anthropological study of Filipino *fiestas* among overseas migrants. There has been, however, an attempt to examine the *fiesta* from another disciplinary perspective. Rockell's (2009) MA thesis in Musicology focused on the music performed and used during *fiesta* celebrations by Filipinos in Christchurch. However, since the focus of study was Filipino music and the different choirs in Christchurch, it does not provide a full analysis of the diaspora's *fiesta* celebrations themselves. This thesis thus fills an important gap in the discourse on the role of religion among lowland Filipinos and its connection

to migration and diaspora. It offers an anthropological exploration of religion through folk Christianity and devotional rituals among Filipino migrants in New Zealand and Singapore, and proposes that Filipino folk Christianity and devotional rituals provide the cultural and psychological support in the migration process, and the domain for the Filipino migrants' construction of community and identity overseas.

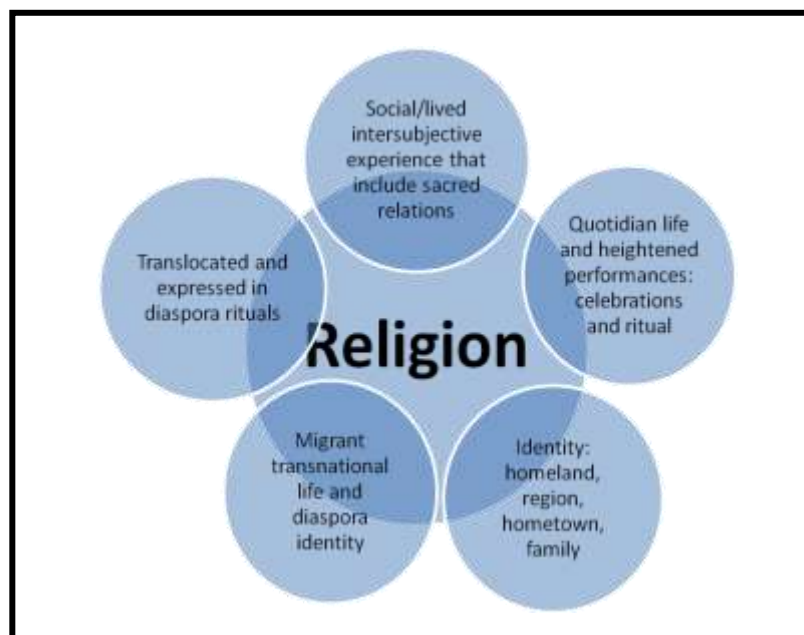
### **Conceptual framework on religion, migration and diaspora**

The thesis builds on a number of assumptions or theoretical premises, namely that religion: 1) is social (Durkheim 1915) and is a lived intersubjective human experience that includes relations with the sacred (Orsi 2005, 2003); 2) as a lived experience, religion is part of customary quotidian practices, expressed through celebrations (Manning 1983) and heightened ritual performances (Turner 1975, 1969); 3) as part of quotidian life, religion is closely related to group and individual identity (Werbner 2010); thus, 4) religion remains as much a part of migrants' transnational life in diaspora communities, as it is in the homeland<sup>38</sup>; and finally, 5) religious practices are translocated and expressed in diaspora rituals, and constitute a vital part of the diaspora community's identity in host societies. This stance presupposes a connection

---

<sup>38</sup> See Diaspora studies that focus on religion and its various forms of expressions, Safran (2004, 1991); Liebelt (2011, 2010); Orsi (1985); Paerregard (2008, 2005, 1997); Tweed (1997); Werbner (2003, 2002a, b, 1995, 1986)

between belief (ideology) and practice (action). Attention is particularly given to how migrant religious dispositions are expressed in diasporic practices and rituals.



The thesis applies these interdisciplinary premises in its interpretive analysis of how Filipino folk Christian dispositions and cultural forms of expression resulting from centuries of colonial rule, connect and mix with notions of family, reciprocity, sacred domain, identity, and home with their transnational life and home-making in New Zealand and Singapore.

The thesis contributes to the discourse of Filipino transnational migration and diaspora by: 1) looking at the social and religious dimensions of Filipino migration; 2) exploring the connection between Filipino folk Christian

dispositions, in terms of ethical and moral responsibility, and their manifestation in transnational migration; and 3) “unpacking” the dual orientation towards homeland memory and home-making of Filipino migrant community formations in New Zealand and Singapore. The exploration and analysis of the role of religion in Filipino transnational migration and diaspora draws on the above-stated assumptions, and are linked to the following generally accepted premises on migration and diaspora:

*1) Various kinds of migrants and transnational communities exist*

Transnational migration and diaspora have often been used interchangeably, even when there are important distinctions between them. Transnational migrants are those who cross borders of one or more nations (Kearney 1995, p. 548).<sup>39</sup> Blunt (2007, citing Dahlman) cautions that not all transnational relations are diasporic. Migration by itself does not necessarily imply permanent settlement or immigration necessary for the development of diasporic communities. It is agreed however that a diaspora is a transnational network of migrant communities with a global reach and usually an orientation to a homeland.

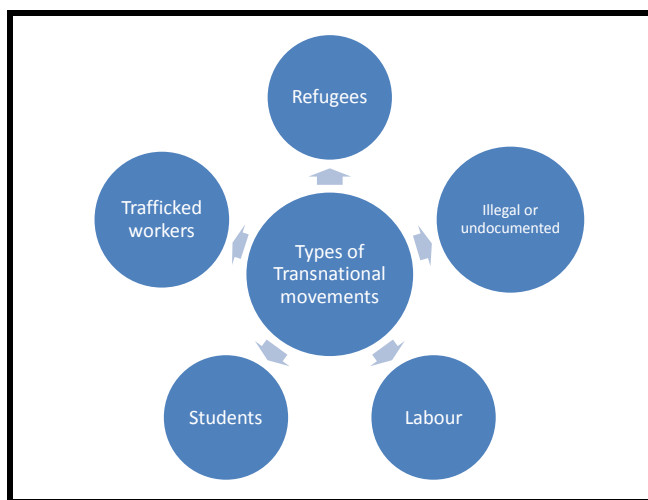
People move for a variety of reasons; for travel, work, study, tourism and family visits. Different kinds of migrants (see below) require distinct visa

---

<sup>39</sup> See Basch et al. (1994); Faist (2000); Dunn (2005); Glick-Schiller et al. (1992); Guarnizo, Portes and Haller (2003); Guarnizo and Smith (1998); Portes (1997); Vertovec (2003, 2001a, b, 1999a, b)



requirements and documentation based on the classification of their transborder movements. Those who are forced to move due to political or religious persecution are considered migrant refugees. Others are trafficked for labour and sex work. Undocumented migrants are those who enter through illegal means without proper work documentation. Migrants whose primary intention is to improve career possibilities, economic lot and lifestyle are referred to as economic migrants and make up the majority of transnationals. Most Filipino migrants go overseas for employment, thus the Filipino diaspora is a labour diaspora.



There is a common policy among migrant receiving countries to distinguish between short fixed-term contractual migrants who are usually unskilled and circumscribed with restrictions and long-term permanent emigrants or residents who are usually skilled, with corresponding privileges (Ang 2001;

Iredale 2001, 1999).<sup>40</sup> This has created social and economic distinctions among migrants which has not received adequate academic attention (Werbner 1999, pp. 18-19). An important academic consensus is that as social formations, diasporas are *socially heterogeneous* and internally divided (Werbner 2000, p. 5). Because of the non-homogenous state of Filipino communities in New Zealand and Singapore, linguistic, regional and class affiliations become the basis of boundary distinctions and contestations within groups and communities.

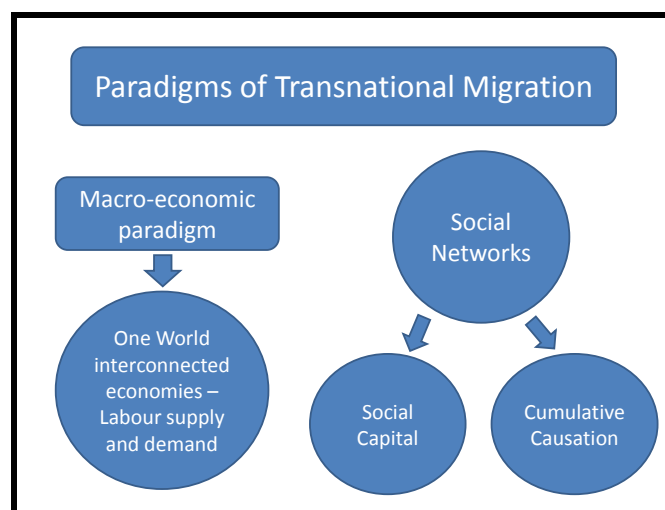
*2) Some migration flows are explained by social network theories of migration*

I have pointed out previously in the literature review that most studies of Filipino migration have emphasised the economic factors, which is not surprising considering that the Philippines is the fourth largest remittance receiving country in the world and has been consistently reliant on labour remittances. But this is not only true of Filipino migration but of migration studies in general which is based on the macro-structural paradigm of a global system of interlinked economies (see illustration next page) which divides the globe into three 'worlds'-- the first world composed of industrialised and developed nations, the second world composed of the socialist states and the third world of developing and underdeveloped nations. It places the third

---

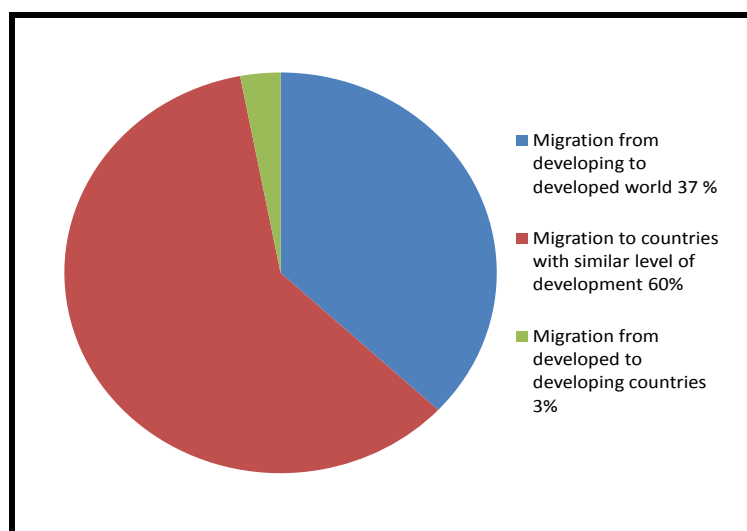
<sup>40</sup> See also Itzigsohn 2000; Itzigshon and Saucedo (2002); San Juan (2001); and Skeldon (2008)

world as labour and raw material suppliers for the first world nations and has generally created the stereotype of migrants as needy, poverty-stricken peoples desperate for a better life in the Western world.



However a recent UNDP Human Mobility (2009) report (see illustration next page) shows that while this may be true of 37 per cent of transnational migrants who move from developing to developed countries, the majority, 60 per cent of the estimated 214 million transnational migrants, move between countries with similar levels of development<sup>41</sup> indicating that the extent of a globalised economy's inducement of transnational migration may have been exaggerated and that other factors of significance are at work. In this sense, the Wallersteinian model, while useful in looking at and understanding global political and economic linkages, cannot fully explain transnational migration flows.

<sup>41</sup> Only 3 per cent move from developed to developing countries



The perception persists, however, even among sending countries. For example, the Philippine media has consistently portrayed a stereo-type of transnational-bound Filipino migrants as poverty ridden, unemployed and close to desperation. Some studies pose some questions to this stereo-type. Cariño (1992) looked at the general demographic characteristics of age, productivity and educational background among Filipino migrants (land-based and sea-based) and found that Philippine labour migration was comparatively selective for the educated<sup>42</sup> (and therefore middle class). Ueno's (2009) study showed that Filipina domestic workers generally are even better educated than their Singaporean employers. Tacoli's (1999) study of Filipinos in Rome indicated a middle class migration trajectory. Lastly, a documentary of Filipino New Zealand brides in late 1980s showed that the Filipinas were usually better

<sup>42</sup> Only 20 per cent of employed workers in the Philippines had completed high school compared to 80 percent of those deployed to different overseas destinations and over 50 per cent of Filipino migrants had completed college or had at least taken some college subjects (Cariño 1992, p. 13).

educated than their New Zealand husbands. My own interactions with Filipinos indicate a middle class migration to New Zealand and Singapore. This does not mean however, that Filipinos do not acknowledge economic problems or lack of opportunities in the Philippines. Most indicate the desire for a better life as a reason for migration, but also reveal the influence of family and friends in their decision to migrate to New Zealand and Singapore.

Aside from the macro-economic framework, two kinds of social network approach, the 'social capital theory' and the 'theory of cumulative causation' (see illustration p. 46) have provided ways of understanding the overall context of migration among some migrant groups, such as the Chinese (Ma 2003, p. 3), and as this thesis demonstrates, among Filipinos. Bourdieu (1986, pp. 248-249), while not the first to use the concept of social capital<sup>43</sup> provides a comprehensive definition:

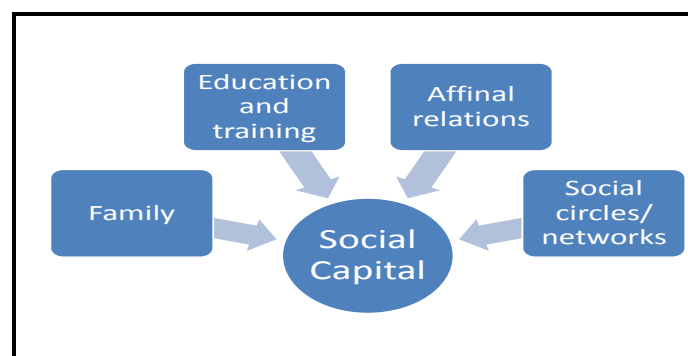
Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition - or in other words, to membership in a group - which provides each of its members the backing of the collectivity-owned capital ... These relationships may exist only in the practical state, in material and/or symbolic exchanges which help to maintain them. They may also be socially instituted and guaranteed by the application of a common name (the name of a family, a class, or a tribe or a school, a party, etc.) and by a whole set of instituting acts designed simultaneously to form and inform

---

<sup>43</sup> L. J. Hanifan (1916, p. 130) refers to social capital in terms of "goodwill, fellowship, mutual sympathy and social intercourse among a group of individuals and families who make up a social unit".

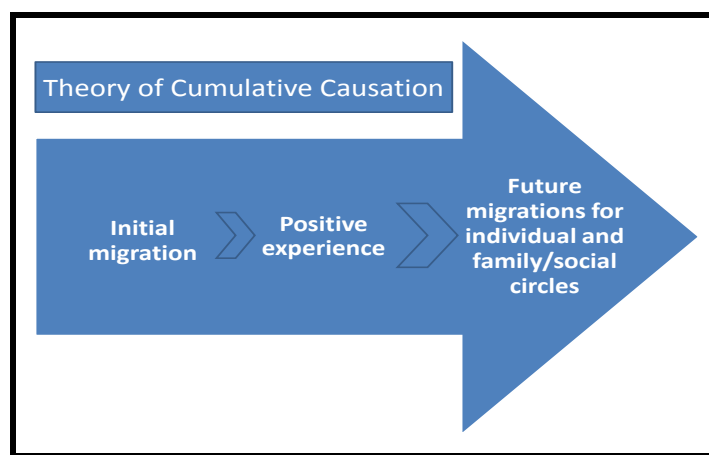
those who undergo them, in this case, they are more or less really enacted and so maintained and reinforced, in exchanges...

Social capital's relevance stems from its attention to social relations and networks (see illustration below) among overseas migrants and how these translate into other forms of capital, such as financial capital for Chinese migrants (Ma 2003, p. 3). The aggregate potential resource that comes from group membership has been the strong underlying reason for the continuing high level of Filipino migration. Boyd ([1989] 1996, p. 301) notes that the domestic units, composed of migrant family and kinfolk, act as "sustenance units" and are "conduits for information and assistance." As shown later in the ethnography, family and social networks provide Filipino migrants access to financial and logistical support that ensures the success of transnational migration and settlement.



Meanwhile, the theory of cumulative causation (see illustration below) helps to recognize how migration experiences in the past (especially positive ones) influence future migration decisions and chain migration among particular

families or social circles. The social network approach, I will demonstrate, provides a better way of understanding Filipino transnational migration to New Zealand and Singapore. In the two places studied, there are cases of chain-migration among family and social circles. Thus, while no doubt influenced by globalisation's macro-economic factors, Filipino migration is also, as will be argued in this thesis, equally influenced, if not more so, by the social capital associated with social relations and networks, and with folk Christian dispositions.



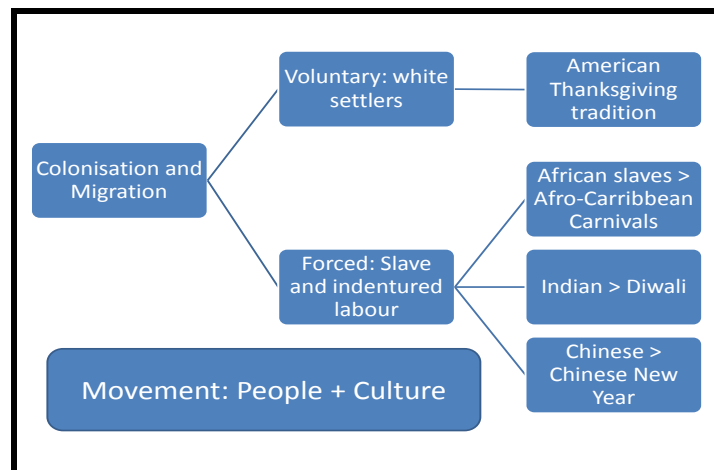
### *3) Mobile peoples transplant, adapt and develop cultural practices as they settle*

In the introduction, I mentioned that diaspora identity is formed out of the historical and cultural context of the transnational journey (Brah 1996). I have also pointed out that the world as we know it today still carries with it deeply sedimented effects of colonisation. Aside from the demographic configuration

arising from major population movements, both forced and voluntary, colonisation also marked the development of diverse cultural practices in new locations (see illustration next page). European settler farmers transplanted, adapted and developed (or reinvented) socio-cultural and religious traditions in their new homelands in Canada, United States, Australia and New Zealand. As they discovered new ways of living and interacted with other cultural traditions, they also developed new practices and rituals. For example, a spontaneous cross-cultural feast organised by the English Puritan pilgrim community to thank Native Americans for helping them survive the first winter became the basis for the most important American tradition of “Thanksgiving”.

The forced migration during the colonial period also had cultural repercussions. Afro-American slave diasporas merged indigenous African rhythm, songs and dances with Christianity, producing unintended consequences of creolised rituals. As Hall (1990, p. 230) puts it, “Africa is well and alive in the diaspora.” The spread of the Chinese New Year celebration, an ancient practice incorporated by the Buddhist and Taoist religions to make it more popular, is a result of Chinese diasporic dispersion. In a similar fashion, the *Diwali*, the Indian festival of lights has become a prominent public celebration in places where an Indian diaspora is present.

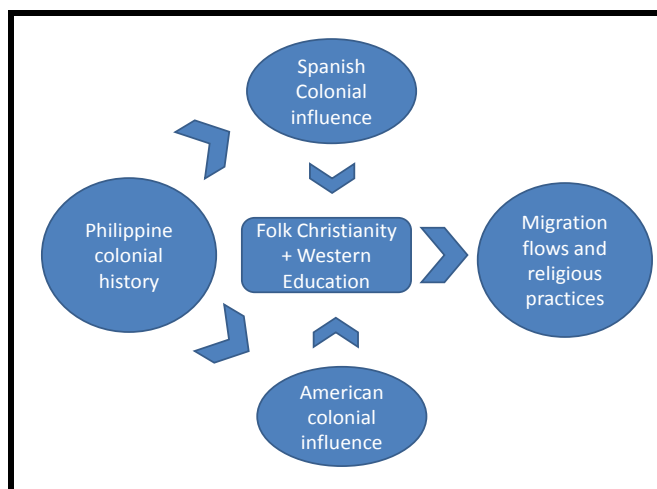




*4) Migrant diaspora practices are representations of the homeland's historical context*

Colonisation was not just an expansion of economic and political power; it also involved the imposition of a Euro-centric Christian normative moral and ethical value system in the colonies. While military might discouraged outright rebellion, and threatened non-compliance with punitive measures, the transformation of the colonial landscape into the image of the European colonising power would not have been possible nor complete without the collusion of various European churches. Some have contended that missionaries “were the most active cultural agents of empire, being driven by the explicit aim of reconstructing the ‘native’ world in the name of God and European civilization” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, p. 6). In contrast to the forced dispersion of Africans, Indians, and Chinese, Filipinos did not experience massive dispersion during the Spanish colonial period, but major

alterations in social and religious practices were effected among the lowland communities in the archipelago. The Filipino community and family traditions, class structures, and educational institutions have been shaped by more than three centuries of hispanization and Catholicism under Spanish colonisation, and half a century of American rule (see illustration below; see also pp. 111- 151; 156-212). The combination of Catholicism and western educational training have helped facilitate Filipino transnational migration flows, and shaped Filipino folk Christian diasporic identity.



##### *5) Migration and diaspora challenge long held notions of identity and place*

Migration provides a challenge to long-held notions of identity and location. The intensifying number of transborder crossings triggered by the changing global conditions brought about by technological advance and increasing international economic and political interconnections has ruptured the usual

connection between identity and place, producing new transnational (Guarnizo et al. 2003; Guarnizo and Smith 1998; Vertovec 1999b) and supraterritorial or deterritorialised identities (Appadurai 1991; Sassen 2004; Scholte 1996) extending beyond and across the borders of the nation-state. An increasing number of social science academics comment on the decline of the nation-states' bounded hegemony and its ability to contain homogenous human populations as borders grow increasingly porous<sup>44</sup> (Appadurai 1996; Werbner 2002b), and 'flexible citizenship' becomes a more common state of life (Ong 1999). Appadurai (1996, p. 33-34) notes a state of "global disjuncture" and coins the word *ethnoscapes* to refer to "the landscapes of persons... tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers and other moving groups ..." affecting "the politics of (and between) nations... as more persons and groups deal with the realities of having to move..." Migration and mobility, while not applicable to all, are of particular significance to the Philippines as the third largest migrant sending nation in the world (behind China and India) (International Organization for Migration Facts and Figures 2005).

The connection between culture, space and place in anthropological discourse has long been accepted, even if according to some critiques, not adequately

---

<sup>44</sup> This should not be taken to mean the complete loss of the nation-state's power. Ien Ang (2001, pp. 16-17, 165) notes that transnational borders "are heavily policed and patrolled, and it depends on your identity card, your credentials, what you own or simply the way you look, how you are treated, whether you are searched, whether you are let in or out..."

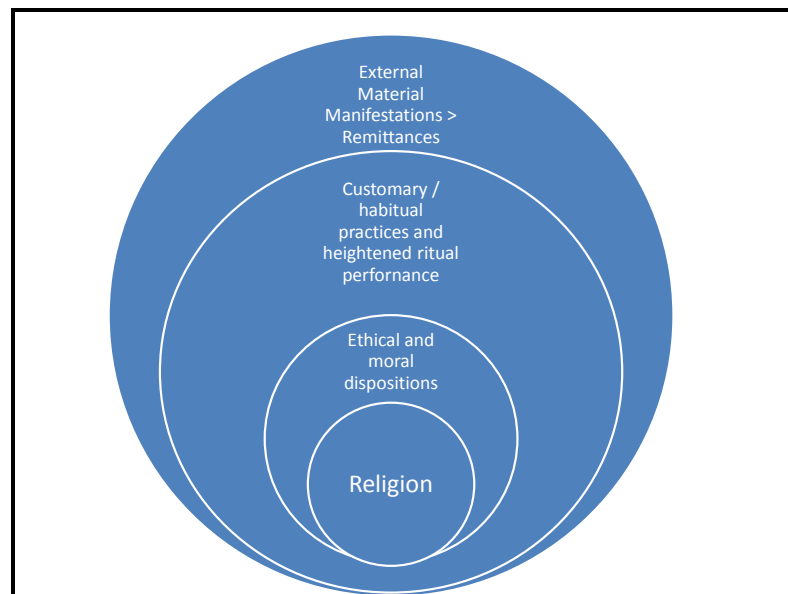
addressed.<sup>45</sup> Hastrup and Olwig (1997, pp. 4, 7; see also Rapport and Dawson 1998) note that “the idea of field as a place to which one went and from which one came back, cemented the idea of separate worlds”, thus few examined what seemed to be the obvious, that “even the seemingly most remote and exotic people do not exist in isolation from the rest of the world.” Gupta and Ferguson (1997, p. 1) note that anthropology’s association of culture with people, tribe, nation which provided the “theoretical basis for cross-cultural comparison” also resulted in the “implicit conceptualisation of the world as a mosaic of separate cultures” of bounded ethnographic subjects. However, anthropology has since moved theoretically away from this vision of the world of ‘peoples and cultures’ towards an effort at “understanding the way the questions of identity and cultural difference are spatialized in new ways” (ibid. pp. 2-3). Because human actions occur in a specific place and time, diasporic cultural expressions, which are historically influenced, are also spatially expressed in migrant host societies overseas. Among Filipinos, the chosen space is the sacred place, which I have noted is historically rooted. This is demonstrated in the celebration of the *Santacruzán* and *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiestas* in Chapter Six (see pp. 288-341) and *Simbang Gabi* in Chapter Nine (see pp. 430-463).

---

<sup>45</sup> Anthropological attention on space and place have dealt with various themes such as landscape (Green 1995; Hirsch 1995; Humphrey 1995; Selwyn 1995); space (Johnson, Langsworth and Symonds 1997; Soja 1996); domestic space and home (Cieraad 1999; Pennartz 1999; Putnam 1999); public space (Harvey 2006; Smith and Low 2006; Mitchell and Stacheli 2006), and anthropological locations (Gupta and Ferguson 1997b).

*6) Some migration processes are influenced and supported by religious dispositions*

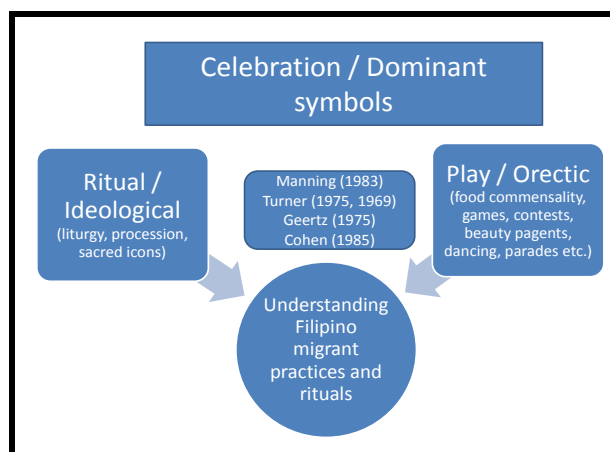
The intimate connection between religion, politics and economy has been a significant theme among sociologists and anthropologists. Weber (1930, p. 27) points out the “influence of certain religious ideas on the development of economic spirit, or the *ethos* of an economic system.” Anthropologists have paid attention to the economy of pre-literate societies. The studies done by Polanyi, Arensberg and Pearson (1957) and Polanyi and Pearson (1977) on human livelihood and economic history demonstrate the intertwining of culture and economy. Interdisciplinary studies have also coined conceptual references indicating the connection between human economy and religion, for example, ‘religious economies’ (Finke and Stark 1988; Montgomery 2003); economics of religious belief (Hardin 1997); religious markets (Mochrie, Sawkins and Naumov 2008); and moral economy (Bruyn 1999). Transnational migration cannot be understood solely in economic terms for some migrant groups such as the Filipinos. Their supposedly ‘economic behaviour’ in terms of remittances, when carefully examined, are founded on ethical and moral responsibility towards the family that are inherently religious. I am proposing that in the case of Filipino migration, the social and religious are foundational to the economic (see illustration next page), which means that what is perceived as the economy of Filipino migration is a ‘sacred economy’.



*7) Diasporas construct identity through ritual performance and homeland symbols as a home and place-making activity*

In the introduction, I have pointed out that some diasporas draw their identity and distinction through public performance of rituals like the Italians of New York (Orsi 1985), the Cubans of Florida (Tweed 1997), and the Peruvians in the U.S., Spain, Italy, Argentina and Japan (Paerregaard 2005; 2008) and the Pakistanis of Manchester, UK (Werbner 2003, 2002a). These diasporas' performance of religious rituals and homeland symbols that transform spaces into secure migrant domains demonstrate the central role of religion in migrant place and homemaking. They also provide a glimpse of the role of global religious institutions, like the Catholic Church and Sufi Islam in the migrants' performance and inscription of identity overseas. Putnam (1999, p. 144)

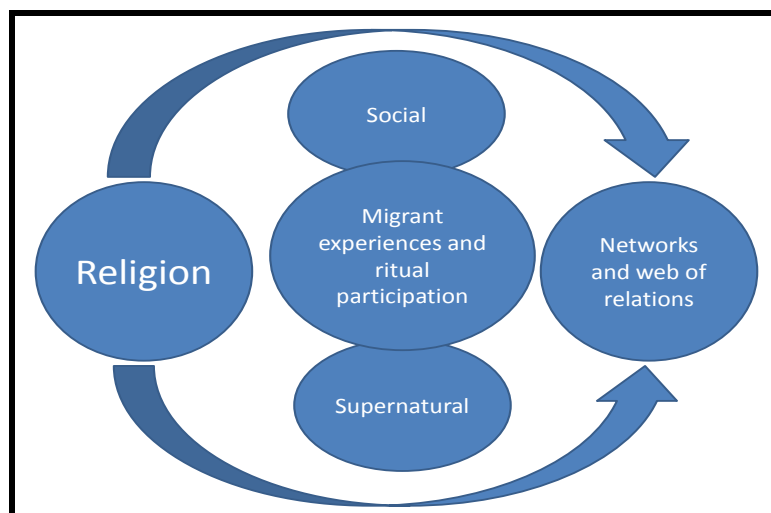
argues that the “boundary of the home” remains the most “culturally significant spatial demarcation.” The Filipino home and extended family are reconstructed in a new context. In the process, the Church becomes a “home” and friendship circles and networks become the surrogate family overseas.



Turner’s (1977) view that social relationships are processual because of their evolving shape and form as individuals interact within a social and environmental context is crucial in understanding the emergent qualities of migrant ritual processes. The ethnographic chapters (Chapters Six and Nine) outline the ritual adaptations and the new meanings migrants bestow on homeland symbols. I draw on the anthropological insights from studies of celebration, rituals and symbols in framing the discussion of Filipino migrant practices and rituals, to name a few, Turner (1975, 1969), Manning (1983), Geertz (1973), Cohen (1985), Werbner (2005) (see illustration above).

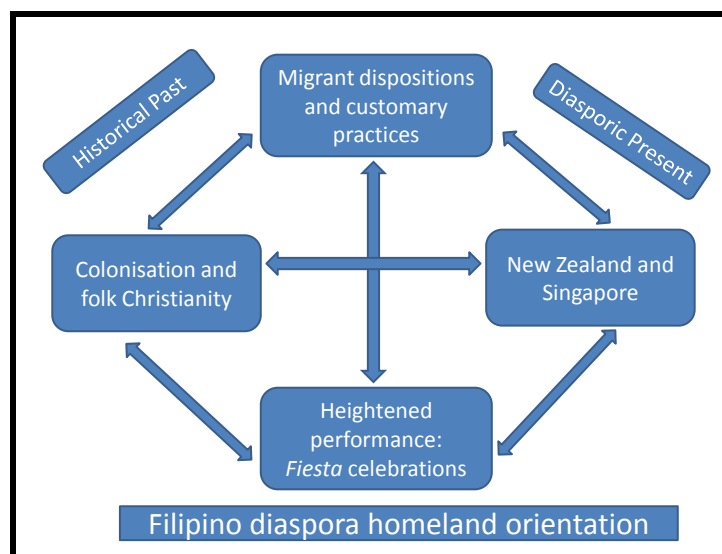
It is important to highlight that the locus of the Filipino diasporic performance is the sacred space. I shall consistently argue that religion plays an important role in Filipino transnational migration and diasporic settlement in the ethnographic chapters, drawing on the anthropological insights on ritual and symbols to demonstrate that the Filipino *fiesta* is a religious event that promotes migrant social solidarity and construction of identity.

In summary, migration has been generally associated with cultural diversity and syncretic practices. Beliefs, values and practices evolve as people move and settle. And while diaspora communities observe homeland traditions, they are not mirror reflections of homeland ways, but rather, contextual representations, as migrants develop new meanings in ritual performance and symbols to address overseas contexts in their efforts at home-making.





Beyond the perception of religion as “a medium for explaining, understanding and modelling reality,” according to Orsi (2005, p. 2), religion “is a network of relationships” that includes sacred beings (see illustration above). The Filipino migrants’ religious dispositions and ritual expressions are not just reflections of the homeland’s colonial and Christian historical past but are spiritual and cultural resources that help build resilience, social capital and solidarity in the diasporic present (see illustration below). The ethnographic chapters will thus demonstrate religion’s social and supernatural dimensions through the Filipino migrants’ reflexive and interpretive accounts of their experiences and participation in the *fiesta* celebrations.



Finally, the thesis contributes to anthropological discourse by its application of theoretical insights gained from the study of preliterate ‘natives’ living in relatively stable sites to mobile subjects located in industrial societies. In this

sense, the thesis demonstrates the continuing theoretical relevance and contribution of anthropological insights to cultural studies, even without, as Appadurai (1996, p. 65) puts it, “the sighting of the savage”.

### **Methodology: an ethnography of ‘natives’ away from nativeland**

The anthropological tool for gaining access to the subject of study is through fieldwork. During fieldwork, the ethnographer lives and participates in the life of the people under study to make it possible to “learn the meaning of actions” of participants and thus in the process “to share the same meanings with them” turning the whole process of research into a process of “socialization into the culture being studied” (Holy 1984, pp. 29-30). This presumes a “non-insider” point of view. In this thesis, the ethnographer is a member of the ethnic group studied. I am a Filipina, a ‘native’ of a small town in the Bicol region, south of Luzon, a good distance from Manila, the capital city. As a Filipina, I have an adequate grasp of the cultural nuances of verbal and non-verbal communication of the subjects under study. Aside from the national language, Filipino, I have adequate knowledge of *Cebuano*, which proved helpful in understanding the themes of group conversations during my fieldwork in New Zealand, and fluency in *Bicol* my native language.

The fieldwork for this thesis originally covered various locations in New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore.<sup>46</sup> I spent more than three years doing fieldwork in New Zealand starting in 2007, pausing for six months for the fieldwork in Malaysia and Singapore from July to December 2008. I joined almost all Filipino activities in Christchurch, covering the diaspora's celebrations and observances of Filipino traditions and rituals.<sup>47</sup> I made three separate trips to Auckland, in 2008, 2009 and 2010 to participate in and observe their *fiesta* celebrations and ritual observances. I also paid annual visits to Temuka, south of Christchurch, during their *Sinulog* celebrations. Visits to adjoining townships and suburbs of Christchurch and Auckland were also made in order to see some Filipino circles and small community gatherings in smaller town locations. I also visited Filipino families in some dairy farms of Culverden during their special family and community celebrations and had the opportunity to meet other farm workers from Lake Tekapo and Geraldine. I chanced upon a lone Filipina in Greymouth (South Island west coast) and some Filipinos from the North Island (Auckland and Bay of Plenty) and Nelson visiting Christchurch.

---

<sup>46</sup> Hage (2005) finds the notion of a multi-sited ethnography as “untenable,” arguing, “If I was committed to study a transnational family or village as a global phenomenon, then I could not treat all the locations in which each one of their members existed as a separate site. I had to treat all these locations, dispersed as they were, as just one site. But if I am treating the whole family with its various locations around the globe as one site, is this really a multi-sited ethnography?”

<sup>47</sup> The only exception was if two events were happening at the same time.

My immersion with the Filipino Catholic communities was helped by Filipino friends and informants who introduced me to various social circles. I was invited to be a member of two Filipino church choirs in the Catholic Church and a university alumni association in Christchurch and Auckland which gathered occasionally for lunch and dinner. Filipino Seventh Day Adventists invited me into their circle. I was present on two occasions that were of some significance to the group: a) when they held consultation meetings to decide whether a separate 'Filipino Sabbath worship' is needed and, b) the annual SDA summer camp for evangelisation (I attended it twice in 2008 and 2009). I was invited to attend a Baptist worship service where a Filipina regularly performed as a liturgical musician. I also had productive conversations with members of the INC or Iglesia ni Cristo, and a Pentecostal community.

There were countless informal in-situ conversations with Filipino migrants during community gatherings; some of them are quoted in this ethnography. A total of seventy-eight (78) interviews were conducted in New Zealand, the bulk coming from the South Island (72) with a few from the North Island (6). Of the seventy-eight interviewees, six (6) were non-Filipinos or Pakeha New Zealanders (see table 1 and 2 for details on interviewees' sex, age and national identification). The majority of the Filipino participants, sixty five (65) in total, were Catholics while there were nine (9) belonging to other Christian

denominations (see table 3 for details). Follow-up of Christchurch and Auckland Filipino community events continued up to August 2011.

Table 1: Research interviewees residential locations in New Zealand

Informant residential locations	Female	Male	Total
Christchurch	37	16	53
Culverden	1	4	5
Geraldine	2	1	3
Rangiora	2	3	5
Auckland	5	1	6
Non-Filipino informants	0	6	6
Total	47	31	78

Table 2: NZ interviewees age range

Age range	Female	Male
21 years old to 30 years old	3	5
31 years old to 40 years old	10	9
41 years old to 50 years old	19	11
51 years old to 60 years old	8	5
61 years old to 70 years old	7	1
Total	47	31

Table 3: NZ research interviewees religious affiliations

Filipino Informant Religious affiliations	Female	Male	Total
Catholic	40	29	69
Seventh Day Adventists	4	2	6
Other Christian denominations	3	0	3
Total	47	31	78

As previously mentioned, in addition to the fieldwork in New Zealand, six months of fieldwork was spent between Malaysia and Singapore from July to

December 2008. However, the ethnography of Filipino migrants in Malaysia is not included in the ethnographic accounts in compliance with the university rule on thesis word limitation.

In Singapore, I observed and participated in Filipino activities in various Catholic parish churches and one Pentecostal church. I also observed the main secular venue of Filipino convergence, a shopping centre called the Lucky Plaza. Thirteen research participants (13) volunteered for interviews in Singapore (see table 4 for age range). Of these, two were affiliated with a Pentecostal Christian community (see table 5).

Table 4: Age range of Filipino research interviewees in Singapore

Age range	Female	Male
21 years old to 30 years old	3	0
31 years old to 40 years old	5	0
41 years old to 50 years old	1	4
51 years old to 60 years old	0	0
61 years old to 70 years old	0	0
Total	9	4

Table 5: Religious Affiliations of Filipino research interviewees in Singapore

Religious affiliations	Female	Male	Total
Catholic	9	2	11
Other Christian Denominations	0	2	2
Total	9	4	13

Short updating follow-ups in Singapore were made in 2009, en route to Christchurch from a conference in the UK, and from home visit following the

death of Ate Gene, my only sister. A final follow-up was done in June 2011, coinciding with a paper presentation at the Asian Research Institute (ARI), of the National University of Singapore (NUS).

All the interviews were semi-structured. Each interlocutor/participant was asked to tell his/her story of migration and settlement. The narratives revived migrant memories of movement from their homeland to settlement, their experience of uprooting from their homes, and the sense of alienation they experienced. Some of the accounts were emotional stories of separation and longing, acceptance and discrimination, belonging and exclusion.

The narratives allowed for an intersubjective articulation of diaspora experience. Migrants for the most part are “invisible” in the sense that they do not take part, or are not asked to participate, in the dominant discourses of the host nation-state. In this sense, this thesis breaks the silence and invisibility of some members of the ‘migrant other’ by presenting the narratives and migrant community performances in an intelligible way to a wider public. Their narratives draw attention to the significant role of religion in Filipino transnational migration and diasporic identity construction, an area which has attracted minimal anthropological attention. The thesis seeks to contribute to the diaspora discourse through an anthropological approach highlighting the

role of religion in Filipino transnational migration and the migrant performance of rituals in the construction of community identity within the dominant cultures of host nation-states.

In addition to these more formal interviews, hundreds of informal conversations, group e-mails and events concerning Filipino migrants and gatherings, both secular and religious, were documented and recorded in various forms: fieldnotes, photos (I took all the photos used in the thesis except for the duly referenced icon photos, homeland *fiestas* and maps), and videotapes. Aside from in-depth interviews and informal conversations, a number of Filipino migrant websites and group communications, announcements and community events (cultural, sports and religious) were monitored. Together, they helped in understanding the overall context of the different diasporic communities, their beginnings and present context in New Zealand and Singapore. They also helped unveil Filipino cultural values and beliefs that support the migration and settlement process in the two locations.

The classical notion of fieldwork as inspired by the anthropologist's hope of gaining "access" to the native point of view is highlighted in Geertz's (1973) positioning of the anthropologist peering over the shoulders of the native to read his/her 'culture' as a text. Tölölyan (2007, p. 654) notes the difference



between emic discourse (the way diasporan natives “talk about themselves to themselves”) and etic activity in the study of diaspora where “theoretical conceptions... disciplinary interests and intentions... and a variety of methodologies combine to reformulate diasporas.” In this thesis, the migrants provide “emic expressions” of the transnational migration process, with the native ethnographer fully aware that their stories are representations and interpretations of their own reflexive self-construction. As a native ethnographer, my subject positioning of a “native” and “partial insider” of the “diaspora culture” being studied in a foreign land helped during the initial stage of fieldwork as the immersion process into the fieldwork site was managed with the utmost cultural sensitivity of one who understands how things work within Filipino relationships, structures and kinship networks. I shared my subjects’ diasporan sense of “alien-ness” and the “non-native” identity in New Zealand, but at the same time, I was also the “other,” a transient student on the margins of the migrant group of permanent and would be permanent residents. My place in the “diaspora” came under scrutiny as a “foreign” and “dubious” presence among some Filipino diasporans in Christchurch. I was the “newcomer” (*bagong dating/salta*) who comes with the “strangeness” of anthropological fieldwork, a state eons apart from the common diasporan concerns of family, work, salary and dollar remittances. I agree with Rosaldo (1989, p. 21) who realistically recognized that the “objects

of social analysis” are also “subjects who critically interrogate ethnographers – their writings, their ethics, and their politics.” During the fieldwork, I was made aware by some informants that I was being viewed with suspicion by some who had a history of rivalries and disagreements, as a person with dubious loyalties. At one point, a call was made to the University to ascertain my credentials as a PhD student and doctoral scholarship awarded by the University of Canterbury, indicating deep-seated doubts about me, a newcomer, among some members of the community.

The process of fieldwork immersion and participation was not solely geared towards recording data, but also aimed at my own engagement in the process. Believing that ethnography is about “learning from people” rather than just “studying people” (Spradley 1980, p. 3), this Filipina ethnographer observed and joined the Filipino diaspora, as a person who desired to learn. It is important to point out that throughout the fieldwork I too struggled to bridge a gap, to get as near as possible to participants’ experiences. To this end, I applied and got accepted to work as a caregiver, the job of the majority of Filipino nurses. In the process, I gained a better understanding of their work.

As a Filipino anthropologist, I am part of a people, who, in terms of their colonial past may be regarded as “a people to whom history has been denied,”

and at the same time immersed in the discipline aligned with the “people who claim history as their own” (Wolf 1982, p. 23). In a sense, this Filipina ethnographer stands at the juncture, that in-between space of the “constructed native” of the West and the discipline responsible for such construction. As the thesis explores the role of religion in Filipino migration, it also provides a ‘native ethnography’ which in a sense does not lay claim to a disengaged ‘objectivity’ but strives to present the native point of view in dialogue with the ongoing anthropological discourse on diaspora, culture, religion and identity. It attempts to give an “experience near” account of the Filipinos in New Zealand and Singapore worthy of its native-ness.

The following chapter, Chapter Two, introduces the socio-cultural context of the Philippines, and the migrant destination sites, New Zealand and Singapore.

## Chapter Two

### The Philippines: a migrant nation

#### Introduction:

*Migration is a courageous expression of an individual's will to overcome adversity and live a better life.*

Kofi Annan (2006)

On account of the wide dispersal of the Filipino diaspora and the centrality of homeland memory to this diaspora, it is necessary to begin with some basic information about the Filipino homeland. This chapter provides an overview of Filipino migration and begins with a presentation of the demographic profile of the Philippines as a nation state in comparison to New Zealand and Singapore. It traces the development of Philippine labour migration from the colonial era to the contemporary period. It looks at significant trajectories of Filipino migration and the emergence of a Filipino global diaspora. It also takes a cursory look at how the Filipino migration context fits into the overall global framework. In particular it describes the historical and socio-cultural context of Filipino migration and the socio-cultural and political contexts of New Zealand and Singapore, the two destination countries within the trajectory of Filipino migration of particular interest in the study. The chapter looks at each country's migration policies and its general impact on foreign migration. It makes the connections between New Zealand's and Singapore's

particular context and the unique beginnings and development of Filipino community formations and pays attention to the Filipino migrant demographic characteristics/profiles in the diaspora.

### Important facts about the Philippines

2.1: Philippines Map (Wikipedia 2011)



The Philippines is an archipelago composed of 7, 107 islands with a total land area of 300,000 square kilometres. It is ranked 79<sup>th</sup> in the world in land size. In comparison, New Zealand, a site of the study, is ranked 82<sup>nd</sup> with 267, 710 sq. km., and Singapore, the second site, is ranked 199<sup>th</sup> with 697 sq. km. The

Philippine archipelago is bounded by two major bodies of water, the South China Sea in the West and the Pacific Ocean/Philippine Sea in the East. Taiwan is situated near the northern part of the northern island Luzon and Batanes, while Sabah<sup>48</sup> is located near the southern islands of Mindanao and Sulu. The Philippines is part of Southeast Asia and an active member of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations).

An overwhelming majority (92.5 per cent) of the Philippines' 90.348 million population are Christians: of these 80.9 per cent are Catholics, while 11.6 per cent belong to other Christian denominations (CIA World Fact Book 2010).<sup>49</sup> The Philippines is one of the two predominantly Roman Catholic countries in Asia (East Timor being the other one). Muslim Filipinos comprise five per cent of the population and are geographically concentrated in the provinces of Maguindanao, Cotabato, Zamboanga, and Sulu. Most Muslims in Mindanao are also IPs (for example, Maguindanao, Tausug, Maranao, T'boli, Badjao, Subanen, Yakan, etc.). There are other IP and ethnic groups, residing mostly in the mountainous areas who make up two per cent of the population. Among them are the Mangyans, Aetas/Negritos, Igorots (which means mountains

---

<sup>48</sup> Sabah also called British North Borneo was attached to the Federation of Malaysia by the British in 1963, a move being disputed by the Sultanate of Sulu of the Philippines based on documented historical claims in the International Court of Justice.

<sup>49</sup> Information is accessible in <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rp.html>. July 2012 estimates population at 103,775,002 (CIA World Factbook 2012). In terms of population percentages, Papua New Guinea has a higher 99.2 per cent Christian population.

people of the Cordillera mountain provinces in Luzon, and include the Ilongots, Rosaldo's [1984] famous ethnographic subject, Kankan-ay, Tinguian, Bontoc, Kalinga, Ibaloi, Isneg, Kalinga, Kankana-ey), Tasaday, Manobo, Bagobo, Mandaya, Mansaka, Mamanua, Bilaan, Tituray, etc. While some IPs have converted to Christianity, a significant number still practise their ancestral religions.<sup>50</sup> Buddhists, who are mostly from the Chinese-Filipino group, make up two per cent of the population.<sup>51</sup> The literacy rate in the Philippines in the 1970s was 83 per cent, while the present literacy rate (93 per cent among ten year olds and older) is considered one of the highest among developing countries. Reflecting the archipelago's diversity of cultures, there are about 178 languages spoken of which fourteen each have more than a million speakers.

It is important to note that, as a nation, the Philippines is a colonial construct, in terms of name and geographical boundaries. "Filipinas" from which the English version "Philippines" is derived is not an "indigenous name" nor is the "Filipino" a "native" identity. Both were derived from *Felipe* the name of the Spanish King Felipe II (King Phillip II), to indicate annexation of a group of

---

<sup>50</sup> Those who have converted to Christianity or other religions are included in the statistical classifications of such.

<sup>51</sup> Buddhism, because of its nonproselytising character, remained for the most part among the Chinese. IPs were subjects of Christian and Muslim proselytising and thus would have Christian and Muslim converts who are included in the Christian and Muslim statistics..

islands *Las Islas Filipinas* (The Philippine Islands) under the Spanish crown. The natives of the islands were called “Indios” by the Spaniards and the word “Filipino” was initially used to refer to Spaniards born in the Philippine islands in contrast with the *Peninsulares*, those born in the Spanish peninsula. The movement towards a unified national identity from the native “Indio” to present day “Filipino” is a long process intertwined with the struggle for independence from 1762 to 1903. The Filipino historicised identity is constituted within four centuries of colonial rule (377 years of Spanish rule [1521-1898], and 46 years [1899– 1945] of American rule. Like all identities, Filipino identity is not “pure” but a result of interactive processes of creolisation arising from centuries of colonial suppression, creative indigenous resistance, co-optation and selective synthesis.

### **Historical development of Filipino migration**

Migration of Philippine labour developed slowly in the colonial times, and started accelerating in terms of numbers and destinations in the later part of the twentieth century. There are historical records of Filipino migration during the Spanish colonial period (Borah 1996a, b, 1997-2004). The annexation of the Philippines as a colony of the United States in 1898 facilitated Filipino labour migration to the sugar plantations in Hawaii and fruit plantations on the West coast. Initially, fifteen Filipino *sacadas* (sugar cane workers) arrived in Hawaii



on 20 December 1906 (Ramos 2006) followed by increasing numbers settling in Hawaii and the West Coast, causing alarm and opposition among the Americans and intensifying during the great depression of the 1930s (Scharrenberg 1929, p. 49). Filipinos were systematically excluded by the US state (Christiansen 1979) when a quota system based on national origins (Allen 1977, p. 196) was passed through the Tydings-McDuffie Act (or the Philippines Independence Act) in 1934 declaring the Philippines a separate nation ending Filipino US citizenship. An immigration quota allowing only 50 immigrants per year was allowed from the Philippines from 1934 onwards, but was increased to 100 in 1946 up to the 1960s<sup>52</sup> (Christiansen 1979; Liu, Ong and Rosenstein 1991).

The rate of Philippine labour migration from the 1950s and to the first half of the 1960s remained low. This was in large part because of the limited employment opportunities outside the new nation-state and the fact that among its predominantly rural population, life was reasonably simple and uncomplicated in those decades. In the 1950s, most economies in Asia and Europe were still recovering from the destruction of WWII, but despite this, income per capita in the Philippines was higher than all of the other East and

---

<sup>52</sup> War veterans were allowed to migrate to the US in the post World War II due to the leniency given the WWII veterans in U.S. immigration. Students were also allowed to study in the U.S.

Southeast Asian nations except Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore (Nelson 2007, p. 7). By the 1960s, some Asian economies like Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong were showing signs of growth. Taiwan surpassed the Philippines in income per capita in 1962, South Korea in 1967, Thailand in 1977, Indonesia in 1985 and China in 1992 (ibid.).

Philippine economic growth slowed down in the 1970s. Labour export was initially encouraged as a temporary stop gap measure to ease the increasing lack of available domestic employment (Tyner 1999, p. 679). In 1982, the government established the POEA (Philippine Overseas Employment Administration) to promote and regularize the increasing illegal practices in labour recruitment (Sills 2007, p. 2), indicating the country's increasing reliance on overseas Filipino remittances and a move towards the institutionalization of labour as a national export commodity. This coincided with the country's continuing decline in economic growth exacerbated by internal political strife, and the changing economic context in the world.

Job opportunities created by the economic growth of Europe and North America, Asia and the Middle East saw the gradual loosening of immigration policies in those parts of the world to allow the entrance of needed labour. In 1965, the U.S. discontinued quotas based on national origin by passing the

Immigration and Nationality Act. Preference was given to migrant applicants with U.S. relatives. Canada abolished migration restrictions and opened its doors to migrants of all nationalities, declaring the first policy of multiculturalism in the world in 1971 (Judge 2003). The introduction of the Foreign Domestic Programme in 1981, later replaced by the Live-in Care-giver (LCP) Programme in 1992, encouraged Filipina migration to Canada (Stasiulis and Bakan 1997). Migration opportunities for Filipino health professionals came about when European countries, needing to provide support for its working women and ageing population, opened its doors to foreign domestic workers and caregivers. In addition, continued European economic growth and industrialisation created the need for skilled migrants. To attract needed labour additional incentives have been installed by some developed countries. Germany offered a “Green card scheme” in 2000 and the U.S. passed the American Competitiveness and Work Force Improvement Act in 1998 to lift the visa cap on skilled workers in order to attract skilled migrants (Abella 2006).

At the time when the Philippine peso was experiencing its worst performance and depreciation in the 1970s and 1980s, the Middle East countries, buoyed by “petro dollars” (the OPEC cartel created vast amounts of financial reserves in the 1970s and 1980s allowing member countries to embark on massive

infrastructural projects), were offering construction, communications, health and education jobs. Massive deployment of Philippine labour to the Gulf region followed such job openings (Cariño 1992, pp. 13-14).

Ferdinand Marcos<sup>53</sup> was elected President of the Republic of the Philippines in 1965 and ruled till 1985. Political and economic problems resulting from its colonial past came back to haunt the Philippines in the 1970s and 1980s<sup>54</sup> during Marcos' term (Majul 1988, p. 901-03).<sup>55</sup> Following incidents of street chaos and the bombing of a political rally, Marcos declared Martial law<sup>56</sup> on September 21, 1972, citing a national security threat from the communist insurgency and Muslim separatist rebellion (Majul 1988, p. 903). Marcos' rule remained largely unchallenged until 21 August 1983, when a leading opposition politician exiled in the United States, Benigno Aquino Jr., returned to the Philippines and was assassinated upon arrival at Manila International Airport. Chaos ensued due to the popular belief that the assassination was connected to Marcos, his wife Imelda and his cronies, and significantly

---

<sup>53</sup> He was popularly elected in 1965, but his re-election in 1969 was highly contested.

<sup>54</sup> Three years into his term, in March 1968, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) was founded in response to unsettled controversies regarding the "Jabidah massacre", an unexplained death of thirty Muslim soldiers in the hands of the military. Compounding the problem, in 1969 the New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines was organized by left leaning political activists and found support among a restive peasantry still suffering exploitation after centuries of a feudal system (see chapter 3, pp. 126-134; 146-147).

<sup>55</sup> The incident almost caused a diplomatic row with Malaysia since it was linked to the Philippines' claim to Sabah (North Borneo).

<sup>56</sup> Marcos' declaration of Martial Law in September 1972 was seen by most as a blatant way of perpetuating power since the 1945 Philippine constitution barred a third term for a sitting Philippine president.

impacted on an already weakened economy which desperately needed at least an appearance of stability to attract crucial investment<sup>57</sup> (Lindsey 1984, pp. 1185-1186; 1191-1192). The crisis resulted in the severe devaluation of the peso<sup>58</sup> and a stalled labour market and economic growth (Barber 2000, p. 400). Unemployment soared to an extent that, even when external migration for overseas jobs reached 400,000 in 1988, it was not enough to absorb the unemployed Filipinos that year (Vasquez 1992, p. 47).<sup>59</sup>

The outward flow of Philippine labour migration in the late 1960s commenced with the Filipino loggers brought to Indonesia, then continued with the construction workers recruited to work in Vietnam, Thailand, and Guam during the Vietnam War. The 1970s and 1980s saw the rapid development and industrialisation of Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Korea which created considerable demand for foreign labour. Asia's booming economies also consequently opened a market for Filipino entertainers in Southeast Asia and Japan.

---

<sup>57</sup> There were some who believe that the economic crisis would have ensued with all the "elements" for an economic catastrophe in place prior to the August assassination.

<sup>58</sup> The purchasing power of the peso fell in value by 10.3 per cent, and had to be devalued by another 7.3 percent within a short period of time (Lindsey 1984, p. 1189).

<sup>59</sup> From 1986 to 2005, unemployment rates fluctuated from 8 to 14 per cent (11.5 per cent in 2005 according to the Philippines 2006 report by Asian Development Bank), with underemployment (meaning people work part time and are not able to obtain full time wages) remaining consistently above 20 per cent and rising as high as 26 per cent in 2005 (Sills 2007, p. 3). At the same time, government external debts rose to 72 per cent of the GDP at the end of 2005 (Asian Development Bank 2006, p. 207).

Since the Marcos administration viewed migration as a stop-gap measure to address soaring unemployment and offset BOP deficits through migrant remittances (Andres 1984; Huang, Yeoh and Jackson 2004, p. 336), there was no conscious discursive ‘packaging’ of the Filipino migrant. Ironically, it was not Ferdinand Marcos, who initially encouraged Filipino labour exports, but President Corazon Aquino who initiated the discursive reification of Filipino overseas contract workers. Parreñas (2001, p. 1137) explains:

President Corazon Aquino has created the iconic representation of its mostly female overseas workers as the "modern-day heroes" of the nation; this facilitates the nation-building project of the Philippines to enter the global market economy as an export-oriented economy.

The title *mga bagong bayani ng bayan* or ‘modern-day heroes of the nation’ thus became part of the Philippine migration discourse. In sum, the outward flow of Philippine labour coincided with its worsening economic and political problems side by side with the economic boom of the Middle East (KSA, UAE) and Asia (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Malaysia and Singapore).

### **Filipino migration to New Zealand and Singapore**

Migration has been the major transformative agent affecting the population demographics and economic development, historically and contemporarily, of the two countries in this study, New Zealand and Singapore. Both countries were part of the British colonial empire. In Singapore, a significant number of

Chinese and Indian indentured labour altered population ethnic composition and relations in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Neville 1966; Yeoh 2007) with the Chinese outnumbering the Indians. In New Zealand, the Chinese came in the 1860s to work in the mines of Otago (Ip and Murphy 2005; Ng 2003) and the Indians in the 1890s (Leckie 2007) who came initially as sailors who jumped ships, others came from Fiji, while others worked in the Otago mines. The two countries figure as popular migrant destination countries in contemporary post-modern migration. This thesis endeavours to show the migration responses and interventions in the two countries, through the experience of the Filipino diaspora.

### **New Zealand: history, migration and biculturalism**

New Zealand's "peopling" and ethnic composition are linked to a series of migrations by early Polynesians who were the ancestors of the Maori, and by European emigrants who came as a result of British colonization. The Polynesian groups 'discovered' and migrated to New Zealand between 800 and 1000 years ago (Underhill et. al. 2001). According to the Maori's own mythical account, the Maori forming a 'Great Fleet' of canoes, migrated from Hawaiki to settle in New Zealand around 1350 (White 1888; Hanson 1989).



On 13 December 1642, Abel Janszoon Tasman, a Dutch explorer, sailed to New Zealand waters and encountered the Maori who by then had been settled in the islands for centuries. A bloody encounter occurred. Abel Tasman left the territory without setting foot on land. In 1769, the British explorer James Cook and Jean François Marie de Surville, commander of a French trading ship, both set foot in different parts of New Zealand, unaware of each other's presence. The annexation of the islands to the British Crown prevented any further French encroachment.

The Treaty of Waitangi is considered New Zealand's foundational document. About forty Maori chiefs signed the Treaty on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1840 giving Maori



equal rights with British citizens. Notable differences between Maori and English translations have caused deep misunderstanding and a continued contestation of treaty interpretation up to the present.<sup>60</sup> New Zealand was placed under the colonial administration of New South Wales. Two decades of violent conflict between Maori and Pakeha known as the Land Wars was caused by the imposition of a European legal and economic system and the distribution of Maori lands among British settlers.<sup>61</sup> The Maori loss gave way to Pakeha domination mitigated by a token assimilation and participation by the passing of Maori Representation Act awarding four seats to the Maori in the New Zealand parliament on 10 October 1867 (Dench 2005; Fleras 1985).

### **New Zealand-Philippines Relations**

New Zealand's historical involvement in Asia and Southeast Asia has been mostly in terms of maintaining a Western agenda of regional security. As Smith (2005, p.1) puts it, "New Zealand did not have interests in Southeast Asia beyond the continuation of British power in the region" before WWII. In the post WWII context, New Zealand shared the Western concern in maintaining regional security and a balance of power seen in terms of

---

<sup>60</sup> See King ([1997] 2001); McAllister (2007); McHugh (1991); Palmer (2008); Stokes (1992)

<sup>61</sup> The colonial army invaded the Taranaki and Waikato regions defeating the anti-Government Maori tribes (Bodley 1999; King 1977; Lian 1987; Prickett 2002; Temple 2008), helped in part by tribal animosities exploited by colonial officials, settlers and even by aspiring chiefs (King ([1997] 2001; Lian 1987, p. 454).

preventing the spread of Russian and Chinese communisms in the region.<sup>62</sup> In 1950, the British Commonwealth foreign ministers in a meeting in Colombo, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) established the Colombo Plan (for Cooperative Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia) to counter underdevelopment, which was perceived as triggering popular support for communism (Rolfe 2005). New Zealand was an active supporter of the Colombo Plan until the 1960s (*ibid.*). However, even with altruistic intentions, New Zealand's Asian involvement was oriented to security interests and alliances with Britain and the United States until the late 1960s.

In 1967, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) was organised aimed at “bringing peace and economic, social and cultural development ... through voluntary processes of cooperation” (Rolfe 2005, p. 38). In the same year, Mr. R.L.G. Challis, New Zealand's Commissioner in Hong Kong, was also accredited as Minister to the Philippines, to facilitate bilateral trade (*ibid.* p. 287). ASEAN's ten year success led to New Zealand's marking it as one of its two priority areas (*ibid.* p. 39). In 1975, the first New Zealand resident ambassador to the Philippines, Mr. M.P. Chapman, was appointed. A significant growth in trade occurred and

---

<sup>62</sup> Its “forward defence” strategy emerged from the ravages of WWII, the turmoil of the Korean War (1950-1953), the Malayan (1948-1960) and Indonesian (1963-1966) communist insurgencies, and the Vietnam War (1958-1975). New Zealand signed various regional defence agreements like the Canberra Pact in 1944 (with Australia), ANZUS in 1951 (Australia, New Zealand and the United States) and the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization in 1955 (SEATO) (McGibbon 2005).

by 1978 the Philippines became New Zealand's third largest trading partner in Asia after Japan and Hong Kong (Richards 2005, p. 289). Following the turmoil in Manila's People Power bloodless revolution which toppled the Marcos dictatorship and paved the way for a revolutionary government led by President Corazon Aquino, the New Zealand Prime Minister, David Lange, was the first state head to meet with President Corazon Aquino (ibid., p. 290). The New Zealand-Philippines bilateral relations expanded in the 1990s. Through New Zealand's official development assistance (ODA), NZ invested in the Bukidnon Forest Project in Mindanao and provided technological training opportunities for Filipinos. Various Filipino students came to New Zealand universities under the full sponsorship<sup>63</sup> of the Colombo Plan for professional and technical training (ibid. p. 291). Trade relations improved from the 1970 onwards, and the Philippines became a reliable New Zealand trading partner. New Zealand exports reached \$ 316 million from 1990-2000 making the Philippines consistently among the 15 largest of New Zealand's trading partners with a clear BOP surplus (ibid. p. 293). However, while bilateral relations had developed cordially it "has not yet developed much depth or substance" compared to New Zealand's links with the other members of ASEAN" (ibid. p. 295).

---

<sup>63</sup> This means that Filipinos came to New Zealand as full Colombo plan scholars, assured of visa and allowances.

### **New Zealand Immigration Policy**

About 22.7 per cent or almost one out of every four persons of the New Zealand population of 4.36 million are overseas born or a former national of another country, by far one of the highest rates within the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD Country Statistical Profile 2011-2012). Theoretically, the foreign-born multi-ethnic composition of its “naturalised” population should have made New Zealand more flexible and tolerant towards migrants, but it is not, at least not towards the non-whites. But this is not entirely surprising. While the current official government policy presents a “model” or “ideal” claim of “inclusiveness” and an accepting attitude (Eaton 2007, p. 1), historically, New Zealand’s immigration policy has been oriented towards white migrants and hostile to non-whites in general (Butcher, Spoonley and Trlin 2006; Roscoe 1999).

New Zealand immigration policies have restricted Asian migration at the outset. But among Asians, there have been more restrictions placed on the Chinese than on other groups (Bandyopadhyay 2006; Ip 2003).<sup>64</sup> The Immigration Restriction Act was legislated in 1921 “which essentially established a ‘white New Zealand’ immigration policy” (Bandyopadhyay

---

<sup>64</sup> The Chinese were originally required to pay a poll tax of ten pounds which was later raised to a hundred pounds in 1896 (Ip 2003, p. 340). It also introduced in 1899 “an educated test” or “reading test” for new Chinese arrivals requiring them to read 100 English words “to the satisfaction of customs officials at the port of entry” (ibid.). Nationalisation was also denied to all Chinese in 1908, making the Chinese the only nationals to have restrictions of both the poll tax and denial of nationalisation (ibid.).

2006, p. 128). The seeming bias against Asian migration is manifested semantically. European whites were referred to as the “settlers.” In contrast, the arrival of the Chinese goldseekers in Otago as hired miners was referred to as “Asian invasion” (Bedford, Ho & Lidgard 2000, p. 21) and caused “vocal European worries” even if they constituted only six per cent of the population at that time (Ng 2003, p. 14). This discursive treatment was repeated in the 1990s when Asian emigration was referred to interchangeably as “Asian invasion” (Roscoe 1999, p. 45), “the Asian Invasion” (quoting Booth, Ip and Nigel 2005, p. 14), or New Zealand’s ‘Asianisation’ (Kolig 2009, p. 221). Clearly, some sectors among the Pakeha New Zealanders continue to be xenophobic (ibid.) and have a negative and unflattering impression of Asians.

A review of New Zealand immigration policy was done in 1986, resulting in pertinent reforms that allowed entry of skilled migrants regardless of race and nationality in 1987, at least theoretically. Two decades later, the 2006 immigration figures show English migration as higher than the Asian and Pacific migration (Statistics New Zealand Migration Data 2006). Part of the reason may be language. Migrants from non-English speaking countries face stiff language proficiency requirements (a 6.5 score in the International English Language Testing [IELTS]) for skilled migrants in general and a 7.0 score for Registered Nurses as required by the New Zealand Nursing Council.

Thus migrants from English speaking countries continue to have an advantage in obtaining visa approval. In a way, this is the contemporary version of the English reading test imposed on the Chinese about a century ago, but now affects most non-English speaking migrants. A significant number of Filipina nurses remain in lower-paying care-giving jobs until they pass the IELTS requirements. Those who fail to obtain a 7.0 score in the four parts of the test: listening, reading, writing and speaking cannot work as nurses. Foreign nurses may enroll in a programme called English Studies for Nursing Registration (ESNR) for a fee of around NZ\$ 4400, an amount few of the newly arrived nurses could afford. Because most are supporting families back home, saving for the fees take time. Thus they work as caregivers first, gradually saving for the test preparation fees. There are also those unable to get the required score.

O'Hare (2004) notes the disparity between New Zealand's self perception as a friendly, easygoing country, and the migrant worker's experience of social isolation, racial abuse and discrimination by employers and some members of the general public. There are instances, at present, where some citizens of Asian descent and Asian migrants have been made to feel unwelcome. Accounts of verbal or physical violence, at times fatal, occasionally come up

in migrant conversations and media attention.<sup>65</sup> In May 2011, a white supremacist organisation based in Christchurch gained media attention for its racially hostile letters placed in Christchurch, Auckland, Nelson, and Greymouth residents' mail boxes. The hate mail was explained by its organiser, Kyle Chapman (a former member of the Nationalist Front and Christchurch mayoral candidate), as just an effort to find like-minded New Zealanders and actively recruit supporters in the South and North Islands. The existence of white supremacist groups is yet another sign that there are continuing remnants of hostility to non-white migrants. Despite incidents of discrimination, multicultural events planned by city councils always attract a good turn-out. And whatever opinion some Kiwis may hold about foreigners, they do enjoy the cultural programmes, and the exotic dishes sold at such events. Multicultural events symbolise New Zealand's inclusive policy and effort to integrate diverse migrant communities to an envisioned multicultural society, even if it is not totally there yet. Hage (2001, p. 249) argues:

[T]he 'fantasies' of white supremacy in Australia is precisely the active struggle to recreate the grounds on which white people can safely feel themselves to be the 'mainstream'. The discourse of tolerance with its safe assumptions about the existence of a stable majority becomes complicit in this white struggle for the 'minoritization' of non-whites.

---

<sup>65</sup> One of the most violent attacks against Asians occurred in 2003 when a Korean, Jae Hyeon Kim, was murdered by white supremacist member Shannon Brent Flewellen. In April 2011, a young Japanese student was abused, attacked and mauled by dogs in what was purported as a racially induced violence (The Press 11 May 2011).

The polarities of inclusion and exclusion continue and most migrants, including the Filipinos, have learned to negotiate a place between the binaries.

### **Filipinos in New Zealand**

Filipino presence in New Zealand is relatively new<sup>66</sup> compared to other Asian groups such as the Chinese and Indians.<sup>67</sup> There are two identifiable waves of Filipino migration to New Zealand, with contrasting demographic trajectories. From the 1970s to the mid-1980s, the first wave of Filipino migrants comprised mostly of brides, whose husbands were mostly *Pakeha* (some married Maori men also).<sup>68</sup> These Filipinas were popularly and negatively known as ‘mail-order-brides’<sup>69</sup> (Boer 1988 cited by Rich 1993, p. 29). The popular public perception of Filipina mail-order-brides was reflected in the

---

<sup>66</sup> The earliest recorded presence of Filipinos in New Zealand was in 1936, where six Philippine Islands born residents, five males and one female were counted (Census 1936, p. 5). The fifteen years that followed gave no indication of their continued presence. Filipinos next appeared in the census of 1951 which lists six Filipinos, all male, five “full blooded” and one “mixed” (Census 1951, p.130). In the 1936 Census, the country of birth was the focal point of resident classification. In the 1951 Census, it shifted to race and ethnicity. Thus, from being “Philippine Islands born” in 1936, classification shifted to Filipino blood, in terms of “full blooded”, “mixed blood” (mixed presumably meaning half Filipino, half Maori). Also in the same year, a Filipino-Maori category appeared for the first time, with a small population of ten (10). In the 1966 Census (Census 1966, p.9), the “pure blood” Filipino disappeared, while three Filipino-Maori remained, one male and two females, listed as mixed bloods. New Zealand’s population categories shifted from country of birth in the 1936 census to racial lines (“blood”) in the 1951 and 1966 census. In the 1981 census, the categorization shifted to ethnicity and culture. The Filipino population increased to one hundred and forty four<sup>66</sup> (Census 1981; Carl Walrond (2007) puts the number at 405 in his article on the Filipinos on Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand.).

<sup>67</sup> The Chinese were recorded in the 1867 Census (Census 1867; Ip 1996 ) while the Indians were recorded in the 1881 Census (Census 1881)

<sup>68</sup> *Pakeha* means white or European descent New Zealanders.

<sup>69</sup> The stereo-type remains up to the present.



coverage by New Zealand's media in the 1980s.<sup>70</sup> The Filipino migrant composition was highly feminised at the beginning due to restrictions on non-European migrant entry except that of marriage.

As previously mentioned, the 1987 immigration reform opened New Zealand to skilled and professional migrants. Filipino professionals came with their families for work and residency. As a result of two decades of a more open immigration policy, in 2006 Filipinos ranked fourth among the seven largest Asian ethnic groups with 16,938 people, and ranked second among the new arrivals between 2006-2007 in New Zealand (Eaton 2007; Quickstats About New Zealand 2006).<sup>71</sup> Overall, the Filipinos have a smaller population compared to other ethnic groups, but the number is adequate for small community formations. Clearly, there is a steady and increasing Filipino presence in New Zealand. In terms of just four million New Zealand population this can be deemed significant but in terms of worldwide Filipino migration, the number of Filipino migrants (combined permanent resident and temporary workers) to New Zealand remains relatively small. The popular Filipino destinations countries/regions are: the United States 3,166, 529; Canada 667,674; Europe 663,889; Middle East 2,850,591 and Asia 1,232,715

---

<sup>70</sup> An historian recalls a number of newspaper editorial and reactions published about mail-order-brides from Asia.

<sup>71</sup> It has increased to 35,175 in 2011 (CFO 2011).

(CFO 2010).<sup>72</sup> These do not however, diminish the considerable significance in ranking fourth among the largest Asian ethnic group in two consecutive New Zealand censuses. It points to an increasingly visible and felt presence among the population and society, which is a characteristic distinguishing a diasporan community.

### **Singapore: history and development**

Singapore today is one of the world's most cosmopolitan city-states with diverse ethnic and cultural groups. It has a population of more than four million, comprising of Chinese, Malays, Indians, and others from different countries in the continent. While multicultural, Singapore is predominantly Chinese (74.2 %) and has proudly claimed that its adherence to Confucian ethics and discipline<sup>73</sup> has helped it attain its economic achievements (Zakaria 2002, p. 38; Ong 2001, p. 173). It is currently ranked 11<sup>th</sup> in the world in terms of quality of life and considered the best country in Asia in terms of quality of life (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2005 Report).

---

<sup>72</sup> Estimates as of 2011: U.S. 3,430,864; Canada 842,651; Europe 808,779 Middle East 2,987,923 Asia 1,449,373 (CFO 2011)

<sup>73</sup> Lee Kuan Yew had stipulated that the reason why East Asia succeeded was the permeation of Confucian values into these cultures (Zakaria and Yew 1994, p. 116-117).

Fig. 2.3: Singapore Map (Asia Collection 2011)



Like New Zealand, Singapore was under British colonial administration for over a century. Stamford Raffles, a British statesman, founded the settlement in January 1819 (Quah 2001, p. 291; Parmer 1983, p. 49-53; Vasil 2000, p. 1). Thereafter, migrants and migration figured significantly in Singapore's "history and fortunes" (Yeoh 2007).<sup>74</sup> Since 1965, Singapore's post independence economic development plan has created a reliance on foreign labour and explains the consistently high level of foreign migrant workers and the existence of migrant diasporas in the country. In 2000, Singapore's foreign labour accounted for 29 per cent of its labour force, the highest in Asia (ibid.).

<sup>74</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as a significant port in the booming British trading route linking the continents of Asia, Africa, South and North America and Europe, Singapore attracted migrants from China, India and the Malay Peninsula.

Singapore joined the Federation of Malaysia in 1963 and left the Federation in 1965 due to irreconcilable differences between Malaysia's Tengku Abdul Rahman and Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew in terms of their vision for the Federation (Cheah 2002; Swee-Hock 2007; Verma 2002). Lee espoused the vision of a 'Malaysian Malaysia' in contrast with a "Malay Malaysia" (Verma 2002, p. 35 citing Lee). Lee's argument for a 'Malaysian nation' in contrast with a 'communally segregated nation dominated by one of its constituent parts' threatened UMNO's leadership including its Chinese and Indian coalition partners like the MCA (Malaysia Chinese Association) and MIC (Malaysia Indian Congress) (Cheah 2002, p. 54). From that time, Singapore has maintained a close, albeit careful, relationship with Malaysia and Indonesia. Aware of its vulnerabilities in terms of geographical size and proximal location, Singapore's dealings with its immediate neighbours involved pragmatic diplomacy to ascertain a stable water supply, agricultural goods and human resources (Ganesan 2002, p. 29), and the development of a determined defence capability to provide a deterrent to any form of aggression from its neighbours (Mutalib 2002, p. 46).

### **Singapore immigration policy**

Immediately after its departure/expulsion from the Federation of Malaysia, Singapore adopted an aggressive economic development and industrialisation

scheme by attracting foreign direct investments (FDIs) and providing incentives to multinational/transnational corporations to build business infrastructures and factories in Singapore in a bid to generate employment and technological modernisation. The strategy paid off in the two decades immediately after independence and was manifested in double digit economic growth. Singapore's industrialisation spurred a consistently high demand for and dependence on foreign labour, because its relatively small population could not provide the labour necessary for a fast growing economy. However, it suffered a serious recession from 1984 to 1985, during which 200,000 foreign workers were repatriated (Yeoh, Huang and Gonzalez 1999), exposing the fragile status of its economic infrastructure. This called for improved economic policies and targets to help attain economic recovery. A two-pronged policy on migrant labour was set in place: an attractive package for needed skilled/professional workers and strict monitoring and control of unskilled workers (Low 1995). Migrant categories were put in place with corresponding rights/limitations.

Aside from being connected to its economic agenda, Singapore's immigration policy also has links to its efforts at maintaining Chinese ethnic dominance. The declining fertility among Singaporeans, especially the Chinese, has been a cause for government concern because of its importance in sustaining the

ethnic balance in favour of Chinese Singaporeans (*ibid.*). The government actively sought ways of attracting Chinese emigrants by framing liberalized rules aimed at Hong Kong and Chinese citizens participating in a massive exodus after the Tiananmen Square incident. Various measures in terms of qualifications and investment ceiling were fashioned to fit prospective Chinese emigrants. Hong Kong residents were allowed five years residency, with a provision for possible extension to apply for residency without transferring residence (*ibid.*), eligibility for citizenship and ability to rent public flats two years after relocation (Hui 1997).

Singapore's immigration policies have been made skill specific. The skilled/professional workers are categorised as "expatriates" and issued 'Employment Passes' (Yeoh and Khoo 1998, p. 163). Holders of this pass earning more than S\$ 1,500 a month were allowed to marry locals or bring their dependents to Singapore and those below 50 years of age are able to apply for permanent residency after six months (Hui 1997, p. 116; Yeoh and Khoo 1998, p.163). Permanent residents with tertiary education are allowed to apply for citizenship after two years while those with no tertiary education but with needed skills may apply for citizenship after five years (Hui 1997). In contrast, unskilled workers have fewer options: they cannot apply for

residency and citizenship, and are not allowed to marry locals (Hui 1997; Yeoh and Khoo 1998).

Aside from being skill-specific, immigration policies are also gender-specific. This has corresponding repercussions on employment protection coverage and benefits. Construction work dominated by males is covered by Singapore's Employment Act while domestic work done mostly by females is not. Domestic work is thus not regulated in terms of wages, work hours, overtime pay, days off, sick leave and retirement benefits, nor are there clear conditions for termination or retrenchment despite being covered by guidelines formulated by the Ministry of Manpower for the FDW's (Foreign Domestic Workers) working conditions (Iyer, Devasahayam and Yeoh 2004, p.15; Ueno 2009, p. 499). Since the Ministry's guidelines do not possess the authority of law, the working conditions of the domestic workers are dependent on a private arrangement and agreement forged with their employers (Iyer, Devasahayam and Yeoh 2004. p. 15). And because foreign domestic workers are also excluded from Workmen's Compensation, employers of domestic workers are required to provide a personal accident insurance cover of at least S\$ 10,000 (Huang and Yeoh 2003, p. 81). Additional stipulations like regular bi-annual pregnancy and STDs tests are also imposed on female unskilled labour (ibid.; Iyer, Devasahayam and Yeoh 2004, p. 12; Ueno 2009, p. 499).

Women domestic workers testing positive for pregnancy are immediately repatriated to their country of origin. In the event of the termination of an employment contract by an employer, the work permit is also revoked and the worker is required to leave Singapore within seven days (Yeoh 2007). Policy distinction between the two types of workers are reflected in the monthly foreign workers levy payable by employers, S\$ 30 for the skilled while about S\$ 240-470 for the unskilled with an additional S\$ 5000 security bond for each unskilled worker (Huang and Yeoh 2003). The higher levy and security bond are aimed at discouraging low earning business and industry as well as Singaporean households from hiring unnecessary unskilled labour/domestic workers thus ensuring that only better performing companies and higher income households are able to hire foreign labour. The S\$ 5000 security bond is forfeited if the unskilled/domestic worker gets pregnant, marries a Singaporean or fails to comply with the required bi-annual medical tests for pregnancy and STDs (Huang, Yeoh and Jackson 2004; Ueno 2009). Since non-compliance or employee's "misbehaviour" allows the government to expropriate the levy and security bond, the policy places the burden of monitoring and control on employers. To avoid the loss of the security bond, various forms of control had been exercised on domestic workers, the most common are: deprivation of a day off, dissuading them from going out, or placing them under surveillance (Huang and Yeoh 2003). Domestic workers



are the most vulnerable to Singaporean control. In the domestic space, they are required to follow the employer's every whim, their sexuality controlled and monitored. In the end, many domestic workers endure domination and control from the time they arrive to the time they leave Singapore (Ueno 2009).

Notwithstanding the costly requirements of the levy and insurance, the continuing demand for foreign domestic workers in Singapore has been unprecedented. Starting with only a limited number of domestic workers from Thailand, Sri Lanka and the Philippines in 1978, the number increased to 40,000 by 1988 and by 1997 there were over 100,000 foreign domestic workers, three quarters of whom were Filipinas, making the ratio of one DW for every eight Singaporean households (Yeoh, Huang and Gonzalez 1999). In 2002 the number further increased to 140,000, half of which were Filipinas, (Huang and Yeoh 2003, p. 82), improving the ratio to one for every seven Singaporean households (Iyer, Devasahayam and Yeoh 2004; Yeoh 2007).

Filipina domestic workers, together with Indonesians and Sri Lankans have been part of middleclass Singaporean households for decades. Seen as a "necessity" and not as a "luxury" by middleclass employers, the domestic workers have created a significant niche in the Singaporean family enclave and lifestyle (Yeoh, Huang and Gonzalez 1999). Because domestic work has

been institutionalised through government policy and cultural practice, barring serious economic meltdown affecting middleclass Singaporean households, demand for foreign domestic workers is projected to continue into the foreseeable future (Hui 1997, p. 121). While no doubt the presence of foreign domestic workers has enabled Singaporean women to participate in the labour force, their 'liberation' does not necessarily mean gender equality and partnership in the domestic space as domestic responsibility is merely passed on to foreign women occupying the lower tiers of the transnational reproductive labour hierarchy (Chin 1997; Lan 2003a, b; Parreñas 2005).

### **Singapore-Philippine relations and the Flor Contemplacion saga**

Singapore was one of the countries which absorbed a fraction of the growing Filipino unemployed, both skilled and unskilled in the late 1970s and 1980s, as the Philippine economy went through a weakened phase. Relations between the Philippines and Singapore had in general been stable and cordial, except on two occasions. The first



of these was during the time it joined the Federation of Malaysia together with Sarawak and Sabah or North Borneo, which was being claimed by the

Philippines' Sultanate of Sulu through its treaty agreement with the British India Company. The second meltdown in the Singapore-Philippine relations occurred after Singapore's execution by hanging of Flor Contemplacion (see photo above), a Filipina domestic worker who was convicted of double murder by the Singaporean courts. Chew (2009) writing for the National Library Board of Singapore, provides a brief account of Contemplacion's case:

Contemplacion's trial in the High Court commenced on 26 January 1993. On the third day, she claimed that her statements to the police had been obtained under duress, but the judge dismissed the allegation. The next day, she chose to remain silent when her defence was called as the hearing drew to a close. The judge then found her guilty as charged and sentenced her to death. She subsequently filed two appeals but failed to have the sentence reduced. Her execution was set for 17 March 1995.

Aggravated by Singapore's rejection of the Philippines' request for a re-trial and a snub of President Ramos' personal appeal to Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong for a stay of execution on humanitarian grounds, Contemplacion's execution resulted in widespread emotional uproar and chaos in the Philippines, causing an unexpected diplomatic row<sup>75</sup> and cabinet resignations in the Philippine government. To help resolve the diplomatic row, a joint committee composed of respected judicial experts from both countries was

---

<sup>75</sup> The sudden deterioration of diplomatic relations between the two countries caught most political pundits by surprise mainly because up to the day of Contemplacion's execution, relations between the two could not have been better. Trade was flourishing. Singapore exports to the Philippines doubled from US\$809 million in 1992 to US\$1.9 billion in 1995 while Philippine exports to Singapore tripled from US\$317 million in 1992 to US\$1.1 billion in 1995 (Yeoh, Huang and Gonzalez 1999, p.129). Various levels of exchanges, regional security, defence, cultural and diplomatic exchanges, were peaking and the number of Filipino workers in Singapore grew to over 70,000 a month before the execution (ibid.). Both nations' economies were significantly affected by the political fall-out. Singapore's investment and trade with the Philippines which had remarkably increased during the Aquino administration and the early years of the Ramos administration drastically dropped after the execution and the ensuing diplomatic crisis. From a record US\$65 million in 1994 it fell to a low of US\$3.7 million by late 1995 (ibid. p. 130).

formed to look into the existing evidentiary records of the case, which later on upheld the initial findings of Contemplacion's guilt. Afterwards, full diplomatic relations between the two countries was restored.

Contemplacion's case became sensational news in the Philippines in the run-up to her execution mainly because it put a face to the tragic consequences of Filipino migration, especially for the domestic workers. Flor's story has not been forgotten, and continues to be invoked in Filipina domestic workers' conversations.

### **Filipino Migration to Singapore**

Filipinos are one among many of Singapore's foreign work force, and are mostly found in the service and IT sectors. Singapore's demand for skilled labour from the Philippines in the past two decades is partly reflected in the number and occupational deployment of Filipino workers from the Philippines.<sup>76</sup> The number of Filipinos residing in Singapore at the end of 2010 was estimated at 160,020: 44,000 permanent residents; 67,420 temporary

---

<sup>76</sup> In 1992, a total of 3,115 workers were deployed to Singapore, mostly females: 327 males and 2,788 females. In 1994 there were 3345 workers with 2523 females and only 822 males. In 1996, a year after Contemplacion's execution, the number of domestic workers drastically dropped, largely due to the total deployment ban for DWs bound for Singapore imposed by the Philippine government after diplomatic relations were downgraded, and for the first and only time, more Filipino males were deployed. Upon the resumption of diplomatic relations, the feminine trend immediately picked up and in the succeeding years of 2002, 2005 and 2009, Filipino female migration to Singapore outnumbered the males (POEA OFW Statistics, see <http://www.poea.gov.ph/stats/statistics.html>)

workers (mostly domestic workers or DWs), and 56,000 irregular workers (also mostly DWs) (CFO 2010).<sup>77</sup> About 240,000 Filipinos visit Singapore each year. Viewed in terms of the total Singaporean population of only 4.5 million, the Filipino presence may be considered significant.

The Filipina domestic workers are the most visible Filipino presence in Singaporean landscapes, especially in Christian churches and at Lucky Plaza, a downtown shopping centre. The large number of Filipina domestic workers is partly due to Singapore's acceptance of 'tourist workers'. Out of every ten Filipinas who come to Singapore for jobs as domestic workers, eight arrive as tourists. Filipina 'tourist workers' leave the Philippines without undergoing the required orientation on the host country's local norms, work culture, and labour laws (Yeoh, Huang and Gonzalez 1999). Lured by the promise of dollar-denominated salaries, Filipina domestic workers agree to pre-approved work permits arranged by employment agencies with the Singapore Ministry of Labour. These for the most part end up without some vital protection in their employment contracts, like at least one day-off per week, and the POEA

---

<sup>77</sup> The CFO 2011 statistics show 180,000 Filipinos, with 44,100 residents, 86,500 temporary and 49,400 irregulars. Huang, Yeoh and Jackson's (2004, p. 347) study places the Filipina domestic workers in Singapore as mostly young with 45.4 per cent between 20 and 29, 39.5 per cent in their thirties, 13.9 per cent in their forties and 1.2 per cent below 20 years old. Most are single, 64.4 per cent, of these 17.4 per cent were married and 15.1 per cent were widowed, divorced or separated. Filipina domestics are comparatively better educated than other domestic workers, with the majority finishing high school education, some with unfinished tertiary education, and a few with tertiary degrees. When the single and separated Filipinas (there is no divorce in Catholic Philippines) are combined, the sum accounts for a whopping 79.5 per cent of Filipina domestics. This is very significant considering that in 2002 there were approximately 70,000 Filipina domestics in Singapore (Huang and Yeoh 2003, p. 82).

mandated minimum salary (ibid.). The lack of coverage of domestic labour under the Singapore Employment Act, as previously mentioned, further aggravates their plight. The importance of a weekly-day-off<sup>78</sup> for foreign domestic workers cannot be overstated. Sunday, for most of these women, is the only day in the week where they are allowed to rest and go out of their employers' homes to take care of business transactions, like sending remittances to their families. For those who are not allowed out, contact with the outside world ceases and a sense of isolation sets in.

### **Migration, the Philippine economy and migrant stereotypes**

Compared to other migrant sending countries like India, China and Mexico, the Philippines is much smaller in terms of land and population size, but it is the second migrant sending country (Bautista 2003; Collymore 2003; Carlos 2002) and the fourth largest remittance recipient in the world (Ratha, Mohapatra and Dilwal 2011; Ratha and Xu 2009). Remittances from Filipino overseas labour have steadily grown: US \$ 12.8 billion in 2006; US \$ 14.5 billion in 2007; US \$ 19 billion in 2008 (Dilip, Mohapatra and Silwal 2009) and US \$ 21.3 B in 2010 (Ratha, Mohapatra and Silwal 2011).<sup>79</sup> In 2005 remittances spurred Philippine consumer spending, pushing the gross national

---

<sup>78</sup> Yeoh and Huang's (1998, p. 589) survey among domestic workers showed a large disparity among DWs in terms of days off with Filipinas making up a sizeable portion of those with a day off, 38.4 per cent having at least one-day off and 29.1 per cent having two days off.

<sup>79</sup> The top three remittance receiving countries are: India USD 52 billion; China USD 49 billion; Mexico USD 26 billion (World Bank Migration and Development Brief 2009).

product (GNP) to a 5.7 % growth (Go 2006). Despite the worldwide recession in 2009, the Philippines posted a 9.3 percent midyear remittances gain (Riester 2009; Songco 2009).<sup>80</sup> Clearly, the contribution of migrant remittances to the wellbeing of the Philippine economy cannot be overstated.

The 2009 World Bank Report shows that among world economies in 2008, the Philippines was ranked 36<sup>th</sup> with a GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of US \$ 317.1 billion (World Bank 2009). In comparison, New Zealand was ranked 60<sup>th</sup> with US \$ 115.378 billion, and Singapore was ranked 43<sup>rd</sup> with US \$ 238,503 billion. The GDP of the Philippines is more than double that of New Zealand's, and significantly greater than that of Singapore. However, the Philippine population has grown geometrically in the past century: 7.05 million in 1900; 16.6 million in 1940; 20 million in 1950; 48 million in 1980; 76.5 million in 2000; 87 million in 2005; 90 million in 2008 and 92.3 million in 2010. It is ranked as the 12<sup>th</sup> most populous country in the world, in comparison, New Zealand is ranked 120<sup>th</sup> with 4.269 million, and Singapore 112<sup>th</sup> with 4.839 million (World Bank Report 2009). The Philippines' GDP in relation to its population has placed it among those with the lowest per capita in the world at 146<sup>th</sup> place (out of 186 economies) with US \$ 1,890 compared to New Zealand's 41<sup>st</sup> place with US \$ 27,940, and Singapore's 33<sup>rd</sup> place with

---

<sup>80</sup> World Bank estimates shows a 4 percent increase of remittances in 2009 (Dilip, Mohapatra and Silwal 2009, p. 2), while Riester (2009, p. 4) reports a 2.9 percent increase.

US \$ 34,760. Thus, as I have previously mentioned, the overall image of poverty and unemployment back home, seen as the main prime movers of Filipino migration, may be taken as a fact. However, I have also shown (see pp. 47-48) that according to some studies<sup>81</sup> Filipino migrants are mostly better educated than their domestically employed counterparts, and have varied reasons for migration, either attached to or aside from the economics. Tacoli's (1999) study of Filipino migrants in Rome showed a middle class migration, thus she suggests examining particular migrant settlement localities if the stereotype of poverty propelled migration is applicable in particular contexts. In terms of this study, the question of whether Filipino migration to New Zealand and Singapore is poverty driven is certainly important. The overall trends in both countries indicate a middleclass migration.

The next chapter focuses on Philippine colonial history, outlining almost four centuries of Spanish colonisation and Catholicism, and half a century of American colonisation and Protestant proselytising. It provides the historical connection of migrant *fiesta* celebrations to Spanish colonisation, and connects the American legacy of an English based educational system to the marketability of Filipino workers in the global labour market.

---

<sup>81</sup> See Cabilao (1992), Cariño (1992) Escobar (1992), Pertierra (1995), Pingol (1992), Tacoli (1999) Ueno (2009) and Vasquez (1992)



## Chapter Three

### Colonial history, Catholicism and local cultures

#### Introduction: beginning with the present

*[H]istory inevitably begins with an interest in the present and in ourselves.*  
(A. L. Kroeber 1923, p. 5)

The migrants' need to define a world that makes sense is always in the present, and draws on memories which help in constructing their lives as familiar and comprehensible. There is no present without history, and so too, there is no history without the present.

Contemporary situations and needs are sites for historical retrieval and reflexivity. In this sense, there is always a significant "present-ness" or contemporariness in the interpretation of history. Connerton (1989, p. 3) suggests that "experiences of the present largely depend upon our knowledge of the past, and that our images of the past commonly serve to legitimate a present social order." National historical remembrance is always filtered through contemporary issues faced by a nation and the quotidian experiences and concerns of its citizens. The historian writing about the past is also inevitably reflecting and writing for the present.

In this chapter I prepare the reader to a better understanding of the Filipino diasporas' religious forms of engagement in New Zealand and Singapore by presenting an overview of the Philippine colonial and Catholic history. The chapter explores the historical connection of colonisation to the close relations between Church and state, and the role of religion in the shaping of Philippine social structures and institutions, seen in terms of family, kinship relations, ethnic identity, social class and cultural practices and their consequential effects and influence on present day Philippine society and, by extension, the Filipino diaspora. Discussion on precolonial slavery and forced domestic servitude during colonial times is intended towards a better understanding of the present state of Filipino domestic workers in Singapore (Chapters Seven and Eight). The historical discussion also highlights the American colonial legacy of public education and its consequential effects on Filipino transnational migration. It also provides a foregrounding discussion of social and class relations among Filipinos in New Zealand and Singapore presented in the ethnographic chapters. I take the position that contemporary religious forms of engagement in the Filipino diaspora are historically influenced and fashioned and are connected by migrants to their contemporary needs and context of settlement.

This chapter shows how contemporary Filipino religious practices in New Zealand and Singapore are historically influenced. Catholicism and folk religious rituals are part of the Philippine lowland<sup>82</sup> cultural landscape and can be traced to centuries of Spanish colonial administration. Filipino folk religiosity reflects to a great extent the native response to Spain's over three centuries of colonisation. Popular devotions and rituals constitute the symbolic nexus of past and present, traditionally, spatially and materially. In the advent of massive international migration Filipino folk religiosity has become an integral part of the diaspora's movable sites and landscapes wherever Filipinos migrate, including New Zealand and Singapore. Indeed, my fieldwork observations of the Filipino communities in the two locations point to the significance of ritual and the sacralisation of local spaces which have historical precedents.

The presentation of colonial history shall selectively focus on social aspects that are particularly and significantly connected to Filipino migrants' religious and cultural practices in New Zealand and Singapore. It seeks to foreshadow a reflexive interpretation of Filipino diasporic life and identity by linking Catholic folk religiosity's historical underpinnings with the contextual

---

<sup>82</sup> Lowland Filipinos as used in this context refers to the Christianised Filipinos living in the lowlands as opposed to the indigenous people who live in the mountains of the Philippine archipelago, and to the Muslim tribes in Mindanao who had resisted conversion to Christianity.

reinterpretation and performance of popular religious rituals by Filipino migrants in New Zealand and Singapore.

### **Exploring the genesis of the Philippine Islands and its people**

Written indigenous documents were rare before the ninth century in the Philippine archipelago and archaeological evidence provides most of the information about the state of the islands before the Spanish and European written accounts. The earliest human fossils in the archipelago<sup>83</sup> are estimated to date from 40,000-20,000 B.C.E., found at a probable site of ancient human habitation at the *Tabon* cave of Palawan island (Fox 1967, pp. 98-109; Jocano 1998; Scott 1984, pp. 9; 14-15) which offers strong evidence of human settlements prior to the arrival of the Austronesians or Negritos who settled in the islands around 30,000 B.C.E.<sup>84</sup> The discovery of petroglyphs in the caves of Angono, in Rizal in the 1980s, with carbon dating from 3000-1000 B.C.E. (Limcangco 2010) supports this earlier finding of ancient human habitation. The Cordillera mountain peoples of northern Luzon are estimated to have arrived in the Philippines from China

---

<sup>83</sup> Discovered by American anthropologist Robert Fox on May 28, 1962, Tabon cave is the oldest homo sapiens fossil in Southeast Asia, estimated to be between 22,000 to 20,000 BCE (Fox 1967, p.101). Lower level caves of the site indicated that the caves had been used for human habitation from 40,000 to 50,000 years during the Upper Pleistocene age.

<sup>84</sup> A new archaeological discovery called the “Callao man” in 2007, based on a metatarsal bone that is approximately 67,000 years old, antedates the Tabon cave fossil by 47,000 years.

between 2205 to 2106 B.C.E. and built the famous Banaue rice terraces.<sup>85</sup> Migration to the islands by Malayo-Polynesian speaking peoples intensified around 6000 B.C.E. and may have “displaced or absorbed” the earlier settlers (Scott 1984, p. 40; 1994, p.12). Archaeological and linguistic evidence based chronological time estimates between 1000 B.C.E. to 1100 C.E. to waves of prehistoric external and internal migrations coinciding with the development of maritime trade in Southeast Asia and the archipelago (Hutterer 1977, pp. 178-183; Scott 1984, pp. 12-39; Zaide 1949, pp. 21-25). However, while archaeological findings agree that waves of migratory settlements occurred at different pre-historic times, contesting views on the direction of such movements (north or south) remain unresolved. Linguistics on the other hand point to an out of Taiwan origin of Austronesian languages (citing Dyen and Benedict, Scott 1984, p. 38).

Linguistic analysis of native languages reveals similarities with the other languages in the Austronesian linguistic family. In addition, contemporary Philippine languages also contain words from the Hindi and Chinese languages (Scott 1984, pp. 39-42; Zaide 1949, pp. 44-46). A significant number of Spanish words are also found among the local languages and are a

---

<sup>85</sup> The existence of rice terraces in China indicates that the rice building natives of Banaue may have migrated from China to the Cordillera mountains. Located at 15,000 feet above sea level covering 10,369 square kilometers or about 4,000 square miles around mountain sides, which can encircle half the globe, the Banaue rice terraces are considered the most extensive of their kind in the world..

result of almost four centuries of Spanish colonial rule. Scott (1994, p. 13; 1984, p. 38) notes that all Philippine languages have more in common with each other than those outside the Philippines, insisting that “the Filipinos the Spaniards met in the sixteenth century were speaking languages within the archipelago, not introduced by separate migrations from abroad.”

Evidence of early political and economic practices is provided by the archeological find of the Laguna copperplate. Dated around 900 C.E., it describes a system of loan and debt payment in the *Tagalog* region.<sup>86</sup> Trading records in the same period mention the Rajahnates of Butuan and Cebu and the sultanates of Maguindanao and Sulu (Scott 1994, pp. 3-4). At the beginning of the American colonial period, LeRoy (1903, p. 659) provides the prevalent view among American historians regarding pre-Spanish indigenous societies in the archipelago:

[P]ast the clan stage and had a political organization under local chiefs which virtually amounted to a mild feudalism....; that they had a system of laws or customs, administered by the councils of old men; that their religious ideas ... included ... recognition of a Supreme Being...; that they had a system of writing based on a phonetic alphabet, doubtless derived from the same source as that from which ours came in the dawn of history, and that they had long since passed the nomadic state - undoubtedly long before the Malay migrations to the Philippines.

---

<sup>86</sup> The Laguna copperplate is the oldest existing plate found in the Philippines named after the place where it was found. The inscription shows proof of the debt-forgiveness of *Puliran Kasumuran's* father *Namwaran*, resident of Tondo, presented in the name of the King of Tondo to Lady *Angkatan* and her brother *Bukah*.

The indigenous communities had a form of social organisation with defined laws, social stratification and ranking, customs and structures for keeping order, a form of local alphabet for writing, and an absence of a centralised form of government. The economy was based on subsistence and communal farming with no recognised currency of exchange but included barter trade, as noted by Chinese trading accounts in 982, 1372, 1406 and 1410 C.E. (Corpuz 1965, p. 24; Scott 1984, pp. 63-78; Zaide 1949, pp. 38-39). More importantly for the purpose of this research, the natives of the archipelago had a sense of the supernatural and the sacred (Chirino [1601] 1973, pp. 264-268; Jocano 1981, pp. 4-17; LeRoy 1903, p. 359) and a sense of connection with their dead ancestors and environmental spirits. Centuries prior to the arrival of the Spaniards each village community or *Barangay* in the archipelago had festivals and ritual performances thanking supernatural beings/powers/forces for various blessings and, in cases of sickness and danger, seeking healing and protection. Early Spanish accounts noted healing rituals performed by local priestesses called *catalonans* among the *Tagalog* natives and *babaylans* among the Bisayan natives (Chirino [1601] 1973, p. 268; Placencia [1589] 1973, pp. 186-191).<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup> The *Tagalogs* were the inhabitants of Manila, Rizal, Cavite, Batangas, Bulacan, Bataan and Tayabas, now divided into Quezon province and Infanta. The Bisayans were the inhabitants of various islands in the central part of the archipelago, which includes Cebu, Bohol, Leyte, Samar, and Aklan. Cebu and Aklan are mentioned in this research as the origin of two religious rituals connected to the history of Philippine Catholicism.

A chronicle of the islands by Morga ([1609] 1970, pp.17-18) acknowledges the spread of Islam in the archipelago at the time of the Spanish expedition of Legazpi in 1565 as far north<sup>88</sup> as Laguna and Manila. American anthropologist A. L. Kroeber (1919, p. 9) estimated the establishment and spread of Islam in Mindanao at around 1380 C.E., almost two centuries ahead of the Spanish expedition. A popular *fiesta* ritual called *Ati-atihan* credits the ten Muslim *datus* with the organisation of the Confederation of *Madya-as* in Aklan<sup>89</sup> -- a group of settlements near the sea (Regalado and Franco 1973, pp. 48, 93; Scott 1984, pp. 98-99; Zaide 1949, pp. 57-58). The *Ati-atihan* (see pp. 201-203) is contemporarily performed in Panay Island every second week of January, a week away from the *Sinulog* ritual of Cebu (see pp. 203-205) celebrated in the third weekend of January which is notably the most popular diaspora ritual among migrant Filipinos in New Zealand.

The pre-colonial Filipino family appears to be consanguineal, bilateral and extended (Jocano 1998, p. 21; Medina 2001, pp. 23-24). Consanguineous relations from bilateral descent and relations to both the mother and father's

---

<sup>88</sup> The reference point for the entry of Islam in the Philippines is Mindanao which lies on the southern tip of the archipelago. The presence of Muslims in the northern island at the time of the third Spanish expedition attests to the spread of Islam in Luzon.

<sup>89</sup> The ritual has a written narrative which is part of an 18<sup>th</sup> Century document called *Maragtas* by Pedro A. Monteclaro, published in the local languages *Hiligaynon* and *Kiniraya* of Iloilo and contains the legend of the migration of Bornean settlers, recorded in 1858, who are remembered as folk heroes by the inhabitants of Aklan Island (Scott 1984, p. 91-103). The *Maragtas* is not considered a valid historical document.



families were equally highly valued.<sup>90</sup> Even today, while the nuclear family exists independently, it has strong ties to the extended family, and the network of relationships surrounding the couple is a web of bilateral set of relationships (Jocano 1998, pp. 21-30; Castillo cited in Medina 2001, p. 18). In addition, affinal kinship was interwoven into the bilateral kinship structure. The *compadrazgo* system of relationships<sup>91</sup> and affinal kinship created through marriage, baptism/confirmation, and adoption figure significantly even today in social interactions and transactions even if they are not considered as stable as blood ties (Jocano 1998, pp. 43-46; Corpuz 1965: Liu, Hutchinson and Hong 1973, p. 91). Because of this, Filipino kin groups were large, and small towns and villages tended to be composed of related kin, both consanguineally and affinally. Family and kinship form the basis of social action, value orientation and moral judgments, exhibited in the important role they played in various life crises like giving birth, marriage and funerals (Jocano 1998, pp. 56-59). This has continuing importance among Filipinos in New Zealand and Singapore, as family and social relations provide the system of support in the migration and settlement process.

---

<sup>90</sup> Jocano (1998, p. 26) proposes a "Filipino" subtype of kinship, which seems a cross between the "Hawaiian type" and "Eskimo type." He identifies three major linkages structuring the Filipino kinship system: "vertical (hierarchical), axial (nodal), and horizontal (collateral).

<sup>91</sup> Wedding sponsors become ritually related not only to the couple they are sponsoring, but also to each other, as well as the kindred of each one, cementing *compadrazgo* relations (Jocano 1998).

Owing to the bilateral and bilineal character of kinship, pre-colonial women enjoyed almost equal status to men. They had the right to own and inherit property, to succeed as *barangay* leader when there were no male heirs, to divorce their husband in case of maltreatment, and had the exclusive right to name their children (Medina 2001, p. 171; Zaide 1949, p. 54).<sup>92</sup> As previously mentioned, women were also the acknowledged indigenous religious leaders or priestesses. However, “patriarchal aspects” developed in the following centuries of Spanish colonisation, one of them the patronymic practice in which wife and children acquired the husband’s/father’s surname (Medina 2001, pp. 24; 171). Also, Catholicism’s patriarchal culture ended the ritual leadership of the *catolonan* and *babaylan* priestesses. In the succeeding colonial period spiritual leadership became exclusively masculine. Filipino women, however, continue to be active participants in Christian religious rituals. This is seen in local Philippine parishes and overseas Filipino communities. In New Zealand and Singapore Filipino popular religious devotions and *fiestas* were mostly initiated by women.

The *barangay* was the smallest unit of governance in pre-colonial Philippines. There were a few *rajahnates* like Cebu and Manila at the time of Legazpi’s expedition, which were bigger settlements of clustered *barangays* near the sea

---

<sup>92</sup> Regalado and Franco (1973, p. 74) in “History of Panay” attributed the role of naming to the father.

or river ruled by a *Rajah* which had a relatively advanced social organisation compared to various smaller *barangay* and tribal settlements. *Datu* and *rajah* are Islamic and Indian titles indicative of Islam's expansive influence in the archipelago. The *barangay* was not a political society but a kinship group usually led by a *Datu* (Corpuz 1965, p. 22). Its governance was based on kinship rules, customs and values. The *datus*, *rajahs* and tribal chieftains with their families were considered the local aristocracy of their time and were later referred to as the *principalia* by the Spaniards. The political organisation in pre-colonial Philippines was therefore familial.

Lowland indigenous tribes were socially stratified and had existing social “castes” of nobles, commoners and slaves at the onset of Spanish colonisation.<sup>93</sup> Commoners were called *aliping namamahay*. They shared half of their crops with the local aristocracy and provided assistance by rowing and providing security during the *datu's* trips (Placencia [1589] 1973, p. 176). They were allowed to have a home and family, enjoyed freedom of movement and settlement and could not be sold. In contrast to the commoners, the slaves were called *aliping saguigulid*.<sup>94</sup> They served in the house and field of the master and were “owned,” meaning, they were part of the master's property

---

<sup>93</sup> See De Artieda ([1573] 1973, p. 203); Hutterer (1977, p. 191); Lavezaris ([1574] 1973, p. 286); Placencia ([1589] 1973, p. 175); Zaide (1949, pp. 52-54)

<sup>94</sup> *Saguigulid* is spelled *saguigulir* by Placencia, an error in spelling. The root word is *gild*, meaning at the side or at the margins.

and could be sold. Their destiny was linked to their master's life and death.<sup>95</sup> Members of defeated tribes and those convicted of criminal offenses punishable by death became *aliping saguigulid* and commoners may become slaves if they have unpaid debts (Lavezaris [1574] 1973, p. 288) but may be redeemed upon their settlement.<sup>96</sup> Orphans may become slaves by taking shelter and protection from relatives beyond the second degree of consanguinity<sup>97</sup> (ibid. pp. 287-288.). Slave status was for life and passed on for generations to generation, because social stratification was inflexible. Class boundary distinctions remain significant in Philippine society. The wide gap between the elites and the commoners continues. Normative social protocols in public events emphasize recognition of VIPs (Very Important People). Social networks and circles among Filipino migrants in New Zealand and Singapore are attributable to class and status.

### **Western “discovery” of the archipelago**

The existence of the Philippine archipelago first came to European attention when it was “discovered” (a sore point among Filipino nationalists) by Spanish explorers. The archipelago was initially named *Islas de San Lazaro* by

---

<sup>95</sup> De Artieda ([1573] 1973, p. 199) mentions native burial rites requiring slaves to be killed and buried with their master upon the latter's death.

<sup>96</sup> This is possible in principle but may be difficult to do in reality as loans steadily increase every three or four months of non-payment (Lavezaris [1574] 1973, p. 288).

<sup>97</sup> This means that orphans seeking shelter from their matrilineal and patrilineal uncles or aunts will not become slaves.

Fernando Magallanes (Ferdinand Magellan) in 1521 because the arrival of the expedition in the Eastern fringe of the archipelago<sup>98</sup> coincided with the feast day of St. Lazarus (Pigafetta [1525] 1962, p. 135, 1969, p. 35) in the Roman Catholic liturgical calendar. It is the Spanish expedition led by Ferdinand Magellan which is credited with the feat of being the first to circumnavigate the earth. Pigafetta's account provides the genesis of Philippine "written history" and includes the tragedy of Magellan's death in the battle of Mactan Island against natives led by Lapu-lapu (Pigafetta [1525] 1962, p. 171; 1969, p. 94). The expedition led by Ruy Lopez de Villalobos<sup>99</sup> reached the islands in 1542 and the archipelago was renamed *Las Islas Filipinas* (Philippine Islands) in honour of Philip the young Prince of Asturias, later crowned King Phillip II of Spain (Bourne [1902] 1973, p. 31; Scott 1994, p. 6).

The expedition led by Legazpi established the Spanish Crown's colonial settlement and governance in the islands in 1567. Legazpi's ([1567-68] 1973, p. 55) letter to King Phillip II states:

I believe these natives could be easily subdued by good treatment and display of kindness; for they have no leaders, and are so divided among themselves and have so little dealing with one another – never assembling to gain strength, or rendering obedience to one another.

---

<sup>98</sup> The Spanish explorers did not know many islands except Samar and Cebu, which are located in the Eastern middle part of the archipelago.

<sup>99</sup> The second Spanish expedition was led by Loaysa in 1526.

Disunity among various tribes perennially at odds with each other was highly beneficial to the Spanish colonial rule (Legazpi [1567-68] 1973, p. 55; Loarca [1582] 1973, p. 37) which continued for centuries with only a few serious rebellions mostly resolved through the help of those at odds with the rebels. This fragmented state continues to haunt present day Philippines and Filipino communities in the diaspora where tales of conflict and betrayal abound.

### **Colonization and Catholicism in the islands**

The archipelago was slowly organised under the Spanish Crown with central governance of joint civil and religious leadership. The Spanish colonial administration collaborated with missionary clerics to maintain Spanish colonial settlements through the *Patronato Real* and the *encomienda* system. The *Patronato Real* was the special authority and mandate granted by the Church to the Crown to appoint bishops and clergy to the colonies with the stipulation that the native converts were educated and protected.<sup>100</sup>

Constantino (1975, p. 65) explains:

Under the *patronato real*, the king as patron of the Church in these islands was to have the authority to determine the limits of the mission territories and to have a voice in the assignment of missionaries. He also had the duty to protect the missionaries and provide for their support. This made the friars salaried employees of the Spanish king as well as representatives of Rome.

---

<sup>100</sup> The *Patronato Real's* commitment to convert and educate the indigenous population to the Catholic Church spells the difference between Spanish colonialism with other European colonial powers.

The Crown's power to appoint Bishops and priests came from the recognition that the Church did not have the resources to send missionaries to the colonies.

The *Patronato Real* necessitated an implementing mechanism, in this case the *encomienda* system. The Crown divided its colonies into districts and provinces and apportioned the native population of each under the patronage of the *encomenderos* charged with the Catholic Christian education and “protection” of the *Indio* subjects. In return, Crown appointed *encomenderos* were allowed to exact tributes from the *indios*. Spatial territory came as a consequential “attachment” to the conversion of the human subjects. The *Patronato Real* and the *encomienda* system effected an intimate Crown-Church connection giving the Church, through the friar missionaries who accompanied each expedition to the Philippines, a pivotal role in Spanish settlements. The role of the state in religious proselytising begun through the *encomienda* system established a close Church-State connection which continues to the present in the Philippines, and has been manifested in the Filipino *fiesta* rituals in New Zealand and Singapore.

### **The *Principalia*, *Reduccion* and the *Pueblo* (Town) *Fiestas***

The colonial strategy of *reduccion* used in Latin America proved to be effective in the Philippines. *Reduccion* required the resettlement of the natives

into compact *pueblos*<sup>101</sup> or towns and villages for easier assimilation and integration into the colonial system. Accessible native labour was needed in building colonial structures, like churches, government offices and municipal roads. Another colonial priority was to make the land more productive by mining mineral resources like gold, and increasing farm areas for food cultivation and trading. It became necessary to access labour and establish effective colonial governance to relocate the natives into centralised villages and towns. Initial measures to force compliance failed because it caused the natives to flee to more remote areas. It was the friars who initially lured the natives into town and accessible areas by persuasion and offer of privileges (Corpuz 1965, p. 40-41; 81) and they were thus instrumental in the success of the *reduccion*. Promising free housing, offering gifts like "shirts, salt, needles, combs....," and the chance of participation in colourful church rites, they encouraged the *principalia* to relocate to the *pueblo* (Constantino 1975, p. 59). Church recognition given to the *principalia* appointed as *cabezas de barangay* and *governadorcillos*<sup>102</sup> (Corpuz 1965, pp. 27-28) paid off in terms of mass conversions. Winning a *datu* over to Christianity led to the conversion of his whole clan or tribe. Success in evangelisation augmented the prestige and importance of the clerics, in turn giving them influence over colonial

---

<sup>101</sup> *Pueblo* is the Spanish word for town or established settlement with a local government.

<sup>102</sup> *Cabeza de Barangay* means the head of the smallest unit of the town, or village leader. *Governadorcillo* means petty governor or little governor with role and function similar to the town mayor today.



administration and policies. The relative “docility” of the natives in the colonisation process is largely credited to the friars’ efforts in their Christian conversion (Bourne [1902] 1973, p. 41).

Colonisation redefined the local aristocracy’s supremacy in the indigenous social class structure. The tribute requirement of the colonial government’s *encomienda* system redirected power and funds from the local aristocracy to the colonists and the *encomenderos*. Initial native resistance to Spanish colonisation led by the local *datus* and *rajahs* came as a protest to the loss of aristocratic privileges in their respective fiefdoms. The indigenous aristocracy was thus offered tribute exemption meant to prevent outright rejection of colonisation and Christianity and given a token semblance of their previous political status (Larkin 1982, p. 601). Constantino (1975, p. 60) notes,

By confirming their political authority, the Spaniards converted most of the local chieftains into willing allies and useful intermediaries between themselves and the people. These chieftains and their families formed a steady reservoir of reliable minor civil servants whose former status was now bolstered by colonial recognition, as evidenced by their title of *principales*.

Before long, following their leaders, most lowland populations were settled in nearby and accessible areas to the *pueblo*, if not the *pueblo* itself. The more hesitant natives were at least passive and non-violent. As *pueblos* and parishes became more organised, Church schools first targeted the children of the local

elites for education, ensuring continued Church support by future generations. In addition to their quasi-administrative roles, the local elites also became recognized church lay leaders. Local parish festivities, like *fiestas*, came to rely on the leadership and loyalty of the *principales*.<sup>103</sup> The Spanish Crown's successful control of the islands for more than three centuries is heavily credited to two important sources of support, from the church through the friar missionaries, and from the natives through the local aristocracy and elites.

The *reduccion* also defined the features of the *pueblos* which reflected the power relations in the colony. The closely knit social web of Church, the civil administrators and the *principalia* was manifested spatially in every town's geographical lay out. The Church and the *municipio* or local government administrative offices occupied the *pueblo's cabecera*<sup>104</sup> either fronting or side by side with each other and thus represented power and prestige in the locality (Constantino 1975, p. 62; Jocano 1981, p. 18; Roland 1967, pp. 41-42; Zaide 1949, pp. 190-191). Local aristocratic families were allocated properties in the *cabecera*, and given control over some tracts of land tilled by the commoners, or common *tao*.<sup>105</sup> Thus the common geographical pattern of Filipino *pueblos* (like Vigan, Cebu, and Manila) was a centre with "a convent, occasionally a

---

<sup>103</sup> Members of the *principalia* or native aristocrats

<sup>104</sup> *Cabecera* is the Spanish word for town centre.

<sup>105</sup> The *alipin namamahay* as commoner disappeared with the abolition of slavery. *Tao*, which means gender neutral human being, became the prevalent reference to the common folk or ordinary person, distinct and separate from the local aristocracy or privileged class.

*presidencia* or town hall, surrounded by the houses of the local elite” (Ileto 1998, p. 42). The *cabecera* was the centre of Church activities and observances. *Fiesta* (feast day of a holy patron in the Catholic calendar) processions proceeded from the confines of Catholic churches into the town streets circling and claiming the whole town for the sacred. Over time the overlap and integration of religious affairs into the spatial terrain of the *pueblo* and town life became normative. Notably, in countries with a significant number of Filipinos like New Zealand, this spatial expression of religion is replicated by the diaspora. Religious procession, as will be shown in the ethnography in Chapter Six (see pp. 294-295; 324-325; 337), ritualises a sacred claim over space and recreates the hometown *cabecera* transnationally.

### **Colonial economic transition**

Prior to Spanish colonial administration, indigenous peoples owned and farmed the land communally (Placencia [1589] 1973, p. 175) to provide basic food and necessities for the kin group inclusive of children and slaves. Land was valued in terms of what it produced for the community and was not a measure of wealth by itself (Constantino 1975, p. 61). This changed with colonisation. From the late sixteenth to seventeenth century, subsistence farming slowly shifted to commercial farming. The natives had to farm not only for themselves but for the additional population of Spanish officials and

clergy. They also had to produce in commercial quantities agricultural products that were in great demand in the European trade. Communal farming slowly gave way to a feudal *hacienda*<sup>106</sup> based economy. In addition, the system of private/individual ownership of property was slowly introduced. The introduction of private land ownership gave rise to a feudal landed class, at the beginning comprised mostly of Spaniards, but to include, from the seventeenth century onwards, the local aristocracy, Spanish *mestizos* and the Church friars. The *principalia*'s role as the local administrators gave them the most opportunity and access to the new system to obtain titles to communal lands farmed by their families and kin. The Spanish government, recognising their usefulness in colonial administration, allowed such acquisitions without much questioning (Constantino 1975, pp. 61-62).

The *alipin* or slave as a distinct social status at the bottom of stratified indigenous society disappeared in the Spanish colonial period, but it certainly did not take long for a new kind of slavery to emerge. In their place, the colonial system progressively delegated the commoners to the bottom of the hierarchy, by requiring them to provide labour and domestic service to the colonial masters and native elites. Those unable to pay the tribute in cash paid

---

<sup>106</sup> *Haciendas* were large tracts of land, usually in hundreds of hectares, if not thousands, allocated or granted to Church missions, Spanish administrators and civilians for cultivation. Ironically, cultivation was never done by the recipients of the largesse, because they promptly apportioned the land to native tenants for an annual rent.

in kind through their labour. The private ownership of land allowed feudal families to demand not only farming labour from the land tenants, but also domestic service from their families. Young sons and daughters of commoner families were pushed into servility and domestic service and were generally referred to as *muschachos* and *muschachas* which in Spanish simply mean boys and girls on account of their ages, but on closer look the label denoted a state of namelessness or non-status. Domestic workers are still referred to as *muchachas* in some regional languages like Bicol. The number of domestic workers, or *katulong* which literally means helper became an indicator of affluence and prestige. In a sense, present-day local domestic workers in middle class and elite homes are remnants of the old feudal system, the refashioned slave from the colonial era.

Domestic servility today not only continues locally; existing alongside massive Filipino migration, it has also become transnational. The Philippines provide a significant share of personnel worldwide in domestic work and care-giving professions. Domestic labour has undergone translation from the gendered and usually unpaid work of women within the Filipino home to a purchased commodity for foreign homes. As mentioned in the previous chapter, tens of thousands of Filipina domestic workers are in Canada, England, Greece, Hong Kong, Israel, Italy, Kuwait, Malaysia, Qatar, Rome,

Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Spain, and Taiwan, so much so that the Filipina had become associated with domestic work in some of these countries.<sup>107</sup> It is worth mentioning that the highly valued Filipino trait of domestic care for the family has seen some expansion into the care-giving profession. This is true of both the unskilled and professionally trained Filipinas who end up working as domestic workers and care-givers.

### **Friar ascendancy in colonial structures and institutions**

Filipino chaplains play a crucial role in diaspora rituals that gather and unite migrants in the diaspora, which include New Zealand and Singapore. Priestly leadership has a historical precedence. Its development is embedded in the involvement of the Catholic Church as a powerful institution and the parish as the centre of the town or *pueblo* in more than three centuries of Spanish colonisation. Friars (priests who are members of religious orders) became entrenched in the affairs of the *pueblo* by becoming trusted advisers and arbiters of local political processes by the end of the seventeenth century. Aside from acquisition of land through royal bequest and purchase from the state (Constantino 1975, p. 67), the friar's active participation in agriculture, production and trade (Zaide 1949, p. 192) opened new opportunities for acquisition of lands. Together with the *principalia*, friars initially provided

---

<sup>107</sup> In 1988 and in 1998 the Philippine government protested the definition of the Filipina as maid in the Oxford and Greek dictionary, respectively (Kyodo News International 1998).

loans to local farmers to encourage them to till the soil, accepting payment after each harvest. They also invested in buying and selling agricultural produce. Since for various reasons (from pests to typhoons) some farmers could not pay their debts, friars asked them to mortgage their land for loans (Constantino 1975, pp. 68-69). In cases of agricultural produce being given as loan payment, friar monopoly of enterprises buying agricultural products allowed easy manipulation of prices beneath market value leaving farmers to face foreclosure (*ibid.* p. 73). The friar's sacral-political power was thus further augmented by agrarian wealth through the continuous acquisition of land (Larkin 1982, pp. 609-610; Roland 1967, p. 47), the base of feudal society's economy. At the turn of the nineteenth century, the Augustinians, Dominicans and Augustinian Recollects controlled 410,000 acres of the 6,000,000 acres of cultivated land in the whole archipelago, or over one-fifteenth of the total land area available for agriculture (LeRoy 1903, pp. 678-679; Wickberg 1964, p. 79). Notably this estimate does not include other church lands under bishoprics, parishes, educational and charitable institutions.

Ileto (1998 p. 81) compares the priests in the Philippines with the rest of Southeast Asia, as a "god-king" who used their "position of dominance ... to transcend the competition for power among major families of the town." If priestly power then hinged on political astuteness vis-à-vis contending factions

of the local aristocracy, it is certain that most priests played their political roles well by advancing within the space of three centuries to having an almost impregnable grip of the sacral and material life of the colony (Cushner 1971). The Church, its related institutions, and its priests continue to be respected figures and thus have strong influence among Filipino Catholics. This is demonstrated among Filipino communities in New Zealand and Singapore, where Filipino chaplains lead religious rituals that unify diverse Filipino communities.

### **Widening the composition of the elite class**

While the colonisation process was helped by the intimate relationship between Church and State, it could not have succeeded to the extent it had without the support and collaboration of the *principalia* both in the civil and religious spheres. More importantly, Spanish colonisation transformed the archipelago into an agrofeudal-mercantilist economy which worked for the benefit of the *principalia*. They were no longer just leaders of their kin, but also landowners, government administrators, and exemplary Christian leaders. This means that Philippine local leadership connects the economic and religious domains, and explains why lay religious leaders in Philippine parishes and the diaspora mostly come from the economically privileged.



Economic progress in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18th centuries created a favourable climate for other classes, aside from the clergy and the *principalia*, in reaping the benefits of the colonial system. The Spanish *mestizos*, Chinese and the Chinese *mestizos* were added to colonial society's widening circle of the privileged. At the very start of colonisation, the Chinese had been the middlemen in trading between the Spaniards and the natives (Corpuz 1965, p. 73; Wickberg 1964, pp. 71-79). A significant number of Chinese traders married local women thereby gaining the right to own land. These intermarriages also produced Chinese *mestizo*<sup>108</sup> progeny, who in turn became significant players in the local economies of provincial towns and cities (Corpuz 1965, p. 73; Wickberg 1964, p. 65). In addition, there were significant numbers of Spanish *mestizos* resulting from the mixed unions of Spanish civil administrators and local women as well as from the known sexual profligacy of the friars. These also became part of the privileged class due to their fathers' influential positions in society. The *mestizos* went to the same school with the *principalia* allowing regular social interaction, which for the most part ended in a kind of class endogamy thus widening and strengthening class and economic alliances.

---

<sup>108</sup> *Mestizo* is the Spanish reference for half breeds or children coming from parents of different races. Chinese *mestizos* are mostly children of the native women and Chinese men.

The emergence of provincial elites benefitting from the feudal system's lucrative agricultural trade opened opportunities for education. New rich families, mostly *principalia* and Chinese *mestizos*, sent their sons to Manila and Europe to be educated. These young intellectuals, called the *ilustrados*, would eventually launch the first serious ideological challenge<sup>109</sup> to the colonial administration through the "Propaganda Movement" seeking reforms and demanding the archipelago's representation to the Spanish *Cortes* (Spanish Parliament). The Philippine national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, was the most well known and the recognised leader of the group. Rizal would later be arrested, convicted in a Spanish court, and executed in Manila's Luneta Park on 30 December 1896, his death closing the door for peaceful reforms he worked for as a reform propagandist, and unintentionally, becoming the rallying cry of the Filipino revolution.

In 1800, Manila's colonial society had five distinct social classes: in the apex were the Spaniards who comprised the clergy, and the colonial administrators. Among Spanish civilians, those born and educated in Spain claimed a higher status from those born and educated in the islands. Next in rank were the Chinese *mestizos* who had acquired lands and prospered in trade, then the local

---

<sup>109</sup> There were previous local uprisings with vague ideological vision. The Propaganda Movement led by the *ilustrado* or educated nationalists, appealed to national unity by appropriating "Filipino," previously used as the label for Spaniards born in the Philippines as an encompassing term for national identity among all the inhabitants of the archipelago. Because of this, they are mostly credited for the creation of a Filipino national consciousness (see also pp. 74-75).

*principalia*, the Chinese, and finally the ordinary people (Constantino 1975, p. 63). However, in the small towns, a three tiered hierarchy continued to exist, the Spanish priest, the *principalia* and the *tao* or ordinary people (Constantino 1975, p. 63). In the course of three centuries, the privileged class initially composed of the *principales* expanded to include the new rich and middle class *mestizos* and *ilustrados* in the urban areas. The privileged class' docile obedience and cooperation with colonial government and Church authorities augmented their economic stature and acceptance. Sporadic unrest among the common *tao* or ordinary people (mostly the tenants/serfs trapped in a dependent relationship with the landlords or hacenderos), flared up once in a while in different parts of the archipelago (mostly in places where vast friar lands existed). The *illustrado* class remained for the most part supportive of the colonial government indicating recognition that their public stature and enjoyment of material benefits heavily depended on the stability of the colonial system that supported them (Benda 1965, p. 241; Larkin 1982, p. 610). The gap between the *tao* and elite continues today. Filipino migrants in New Zealand and Singapore remain conscious of class distinctions. This is shown by social networks and circles connected to status and class. In the ethnography of the *fiesta* in New Zealand, the intimate relations between church leadership and elite families will be highlighted.

### **Contesting realms in the *pueblo***

This section shows historically how the Church has evolved as the locus of Filipino community gatherings and contestations. This is important in understanding why Filipino diasporic communities, though not homogenous, continue to congregate in church spaces. Filipino diasporic groups and circles often follow regional, hometown and familial alliances. Contestations and conflicts are sometimes carried over the sacred domain, and affect the organisation and celebration of *fiesta* rituals, as shown in the ethnographic chapters (Chapters Five, Six, Seven, Eight and Nine).

When the Spanish missionaries introduced Catholicism simultaneously with the *reduccion*, each *pueblo* or town was assigned a *Santo Patron* for its protection and guidance. This remains very important today for the Philippines and its migrant diaspora. Petitions for good harvest, security and healing may be requested from the *Santo Patron* by parishioners. In return for its blessing and protection, each *Santo Patron* is honoured annually in a town feast or *fiesta* on a date specified in the Catholic liturgical calendar for the respective holy patron's feast day. The new native converts were encouraged to pray a novena to the *pueblo's* holy patron for nine consecutive days before the *fiesta*. The *principales* usually led in the devotional exercises and celebration of the *fiesta*.

In the *fiesta* production, the Spanish priest takes the role of the father, supported and aided by the *hermanos* and *hermanas* (or *mayores*) which in Spanish means brothers or sisters, as senior members of the town. The modelling of town *fiesta* administration on family structure illustrates the importance of the family in the Filipino social organisation. It is important to note that Filipino family relationships are hierarchical. Elder brothers and sisters are given respect after the parents (Jocano 1998, pp. 35-38; Medina 2001, pp. 29-30). Until today, the structures and systems of *fiesta* sponsorship and management continue to lie in the hands of the *hermanos* and *hermanas*, which mostly come from the well-off members of the town or the politically and professionally known residents who can rally support and participation. As this thesis will show, since the majority of Filipino migrants in New Zealand and Singapore are lowland Catholics, the *fiesta* system and structure have expanded into the diaspora and that hometown family structures and relationships are re-enacted in the diasporic *fiesta* transporting home cultural structures and practices in foreign lands.

Social life and structure in the Spanish colonial period revolved around the governance of the *pueblo*, its three components being the church and Spanish civil administration, the *ilustrado* or privileged class, and the common folk or *tao*. The *pueblo* was a space of interaction and contestation where those

wielding and craving power positioned themselves for greater leverage and influence.

Ileto (1998), a Filipino historian, proposes the ‘three realms’ paradigm in understanding the Philippine *pueblo* under Spanish colonial society. The first realm was the “church-convento complex and the minister of Christ” (the friar); the second realm was the space “dominated by the mayor, his allies, tenants, police and kinfolk” (ibid. pp. 81-82) and the third realm was composed of the common *tao* existing at the margins (ibid. p. 95).

The first and second realms were intimately connected and actively engaged in a contestation that yields both power and prestige. While their rise and fall clearly depended on their collaboration and cooperation, some things were contested subtly (mostly leadership positions) as in a delicate dance, making challenging moves, but ensuring that the status quo of power and influence remained undisturbed and strategically apportioned among them.

The third realm, Ileto (1998, p. 85) suggests, existed at the margins of the *pueblo*, a sacred place apart from the sacral-material partnership in the *cabecera* or town square--an indigenous “holy space” where spiritual communion with the supernatural took place. It was the *tao*’s “holy ground” or

sacral site, the place of refuge and spiritual renewal, away from the material concerns and “corruption” of the colonial *pueblo*. Rituals in various forms could be performed in these sacred sites without censure. They offered the masses respite and freedom from the subtle power rivalries of the *pueblo* and the rigid religious rules where transgressions merited corporal punishment by the ardent friars of Catholicism. Traditionally, in most Filipino local cultures, there were known sacred mountains and sites which provided ordinary folk places for spiritual refuge and seasonal pilgrimages, and where native teachers or spiritual leaders resided, healing and facilitating connection with the spirit world (ibid. pp. 85-86).

In this sense, the first and second realms are located within the town centre, and consist of the brokers within the *pueblo*, the religious and the civil administrators, while the third realm is located outside, in pre-colonial sacred spaces where natives are free to perform indigenous religious practices and rituals. While most Philippine historians have noted class hierarchy among Filipinos during colonial times (Constantino 1975; Corpuz 1965; and Zaide 1949) it is Iloilo's (1998) three realm framework which helps to understand the role and existence of sacred sites in popular religiosity, and also advances a view of the third realm as a site of native resistance to organised religion, in this case, colonial Catholicism's control, and a subaltern place for spiritual

communion. This view seems to be supported by the restlessness among the ordinary, mostly rural folks, shown in the form of various nativist religious movements which synthesized folk religious beliefs with economic and political resentment fuelled by Spanish suppression and land problems. The most exemplary case cited by Iletto for the third realm's subversive role was the unique case of *Cofradia de San Jose*, an event predating the development of 'Filipino identity' and national consciousness (ibid. pp. 78-79).

In 1841, a lay religious association called *Cofradia de San Jose* led by Apolinario de la Cruz, popularly known as "*Hermano Pule*" or simply "*Ka Pule*," had a large following among the *indios*<sup>110</sup> from the small *pueblos* around Mt. Banahaw (Iletto [1979] 2008, p. 29-73; 1998, p. 95). Upon the instigation of the jealous Franciscan friars of Tayabas wary of the association's large following, the association was denied church recognition, and was not only ordered to disband, but also threatened with excommunication. This move drove the association underground and its members were thereby considered outlaws. The group continued to meet despite the disbandment order. An attack on the group's base near the slope of *Isabang*, *Tayabas* was led by the *Alcalde Mayor* Ortega. The group fought back resulting in the tragic death of the mayor with some of his men. Alarmed, the Spanish government

---

<sup>110</sup> Membership to the association was estimated to be about five thousand, a significant number in those times, distributed in a number of townships around Mt. Banahaw, and even Tondo, Manila.



mustered a bigger army and launched a second successful assault killing numerous group members while arresting the rest who survived. Apolinario was captured a day later and executed. All those previously captured were also executed. Before execution, the members were asked the reason why they rebelled and the common answer was, “to pray” (Ileto [1979] 2008, p. 62). In this sense, prayer is seen as a form of resistance and reaction to domination. Among Filipinos in New Zealand, devotional prayers and rituals help assuage feelings of isolation, discrimination and insecurity. In Singapore, this connects to the Filipina domestic workers’s resort to the use of ritual and prayer in their construction of identity and meaning in the face of difficult employers and an unwelcoming host society of Singapore.

Making sense of *Cofradia*’s debacle in the overall scheme of Philippine history has produced various interpretations from social science academics. Admittedly, Ileto (1998, pp. 30-31) has offered a convincing argument that while the *Cofradia* event pre-dated the national struggle, it shared a common feature, namely, the emerging national consciousness that sought to define a world in its own terms. But while some historians link *Cofradia* to the emergence of nationalist consciousness and the nationalist movement, such a connection “may be arbitrary” (Sweet cited by Ileto 1998, p. 30). Ileto’s view de-emphasises if not ignores the association’s loyal Catholicism. By Ileto’s

own account, *Cofradia* members expressed their religious devotion to their holy patrons, Jesus, Mary and Joseph, in their regular rituals and community prayers, which also included a Mass. The *Cofradia* members' desire to establish spiritual communion and metonymic contact with their holy patrons possesses a close similarity to the ritual observances of present day devotees of popular devotions and novenas in today's Church proclaimed shrines and among migrant devotees in New Zealand and Singapore. *Cofradia* members never advocated independence from Spain, nor espoused armed revolution. *Cofradia's* consciousness was obviously more religious and class-based than revolutionary. Members were Christians from humble farming communities who truly believed in God's protection and died believing so. *Cofradia's* religious character sought connection with rituals of subversion: containing violence among individuals, groups and communities through symbolic representation, on one hand, and strengthening resolve, determination, courage and bravery in the face of a possible ultimate sacrifice against what are perceived to be evil forces, on the other hand. *Cofradia's* rituals at the beginning brought much consolation, peace and goodwill to its members, but at the critical point of defeat, their faith allowed members to confront their fears and face eventual death. The friar responsible for the suppression of *Cofradia* admitted that Apolinario de la Cruz "died serenely and showed unusual greatness of spirit" (Ileto [1979] 2008, p. 62). The *Cofradia* tragedy

illustrates the ordinary *tao*'s desire for subaltern sacred sites and forms of religious expressions to satisfy sacred longings and a quotidian search for meaning. The convergence of Filipinos migrants in New Zealand and Singapore in Church spaces to perform devotional rituals and celebrate community *fiestas* satisfy a similar longing for the sacred and search for meaning in foreign lands.

Ileto's framework of the three-realms in the *pueblos* remains significant in understanding Filipino folk and devotional religiosity. However, sacred shrines of the holy patrons in Philippine towns and cities have mostly taken over the place of indigenous sacred sites among present day Filipinos with the possible exception of Mt. Banahaw which continues to draw thousands of pilgrims each year. Part of the reason for this may be the incorporation of indigenous practices into town *fiesta* rituals, and the Church's tolerance of pious devotions to the holy patrons. These have provided the space for folk religious expressions. Clearly the desire for the sacred continues among Filipinos who flock to devotional shrines and subaltern sites in the mountains. It is not uncommon to hear once in a while about pilgrimages being taken by communities to sites where miracles are believed to have taken place. Whereas before, it was a sign of resistance to colonial rule and power elites, today's pilgrimages to these subaltern sites are expressions of metonymic longing for

the sacred, as well as finding meaning in the midst of rapid changes brought about by modernity.

The problem of finding meaning continues in the post modern world. And while Nietzsche ([1882] 1974) has famously declared the death of God, for most people God and religion live on (Berger 2005, 2001, 1999). Like most countries in Asia, religion continues to be relevant in the Philippines. The Catholic Church continues to play a major role in Philippine society. The town *fiesta* rituals remain centred in the Catholic parish and *fiesta* processions continue to emanate from the church to circle the town signifying religious boundaries and authority.

The thesis argues that religion, in the form of popular religiosity, plays a relevant role in Filipino transnational migration. The Filipino migrants take their sacred symbols on a transnational journey and perform homeland folk Christian traditions in the process of home-making in a new land. Sacred affect is finding transnational expression in a special way among domestic workers in Singapore as they negotiate a time for church from employers who exercise power and control over their lives in the domestic space. This is part of the ethnographic account of Filipinos in Singapore in chapters seven and eight.

### **US Colonial administration**

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the United States was an emerging world power and was thus looking for opportunities of expansion in Asia. It found such an opening at the end of the Spanish-American War by acquiring the Philippines through the Treaty of Paris. This however became a sore point among Filipino nationalists because the US was aware of the existence of the Filipino revolutionary government set up before the Treaty of Paris. The United States of America ruled the Philippines from 1901 to 1946. A brief Commonwealth period was interrupted by the Second World War, but Philippine independence was granted in 1946.

US modernisation at the close of the nineteenth century, while strengthening its political and economic interests, also garnered attention and critique from the Protestant churches, especially those from the Southern states. Protestant Fundamentalism emerged in 1910 with the publication of “The Fundamentals” which contained ninety articles of Protestant theologians opposed to any compromises with modernism (Kepel 1994, p. 105). Protestant fundamentalism had influenced the conservative ethic of the American system which extended to the Philippines. Since Catholicism was seen by most Protestants as “idolatrous” the conversion of Filipino Catholics to Protestantism’s “Christ of the Bible” was seen by some to be necessary.

If during the Spanish colonial era there was a close collaboration between the Catholic leadership and the Spanish Crown, in a similar manner the United States' political leadership had a good deal of support from Protestant church groups at the beginning. Clymer's (1980) study of the Methodist Episcopal Church notes that prior to the annexation of the Philippines as an American colony, there was more than adequate interest within the Methodist Episcopal Church to send missionaries to the Philippines, but realised that protestant evangelisation in the Philippines could not be accomplished with Catholic Spaniards at the helm. After the American acquisition of the Philippines, Methodist Bishop James M. Thoburn recommended the sending of missionaries even in the face of Filipino resistance to American occupation, approving the necessity of military force to realize the larger objective of mission evangelisation (Clymer 1980, p. 36). For the second time in Philippine history, religion supported the colonial agenda. It is important to note, however, that while a religious impetus to convert Filipinos (this time from Spanish Catholicism to American Protestantism) was initially a part of the United States colonial project, it fell short in the implementation. Protestant missionaries who had expected the government to bring about significant social change soon discovered that the priority was the success of the American colonial agenda of capitalism and liberal democracy's ideal

American dream rather than a radical prophetic challenge to the *status quo* from conservative Christians.

Another similarity between the Spanish and American colonisation was their cooptation of the Filipino ruling class. A feudal-mercantilist system was deeply entrenched when the Americans came. The U.S. colonial government took steps to integrate its new colony into an advancing world capitalist system. Business and trade were encouraged. The *Hispanised* privileged class, meaning, the elite or *ilustrados* consisting of the *principalia*, *intelligentsia* and *mestizos* (Spanish and Chinese), were easily appointed to important positions in the newly organised colonial government (Corpuz 1965, pp. 65-67). The elite helped the American colonial administration by filling the gap in local leadership at the national, provincial and municipal levels. Other members of the elite class also eased into their new roles as industrialists and capitalists effortlessly, while retaining control of their land holdings. Large Church and friar land holdings remained with additional acquisitions recorded. Not surprisingly sporadic peasant unrest occurred during the American occupation. One of these, the *Sakdal* uprising,<sup>111</sup> came from one of the religious estates (Allen 1938, p. 54). In 1933 a land reform law was enacted. However,

---

<sup>111</sup> The *Sakdal* (meaning accuse in *Tagalog*) uprising was founded in Central Luzon by Benigno Ramos in 1930, and embraced by mostly illiterate farmers, advocating tax reduction for the poor and radical land reform. The *Sakdalistas* formed a political party which did well in the 1934 elections. Members who were partially armed seized municipal buildings in 14 towns on the night of 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1935. It was crushed the following day with a loss of more than 100 lives.

implementation required the proclamation of specific provinces as land reform areas, which came more than a decade later in 1946 (Overholt 1976, p. 427). This proved to be too late and insufficient to address the enormity of the agrarian problem. Land reform hardly figured in the legislative or administrative agenda since big landholders from the Spanish colonial period now expanded their influence, foraying into politics by filtering family members or friends into the new liberal-democratic system. Clearly, the mere proclamation of land reform in the absence of definitive parameters of implementation was from the onset doomed to failure. Various attempts have since been made towards a genuinely pro-tenant farmer reform, with limited success. Large landholdings continue to survive. The family of arguably the most popular president of the Philippines, Corazon Aquino, has been able to keep its vast *Hacienda Luisita* estate even with a Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Programme (CARP) policy enacted under her watch in the post “People Power Revolution” era.<sup>112</sup>

The introduction of liberal democracy and the development of education were the main features of the American colonial period. The American political model of a presidential form of government and a two-party election system

---

<sup>112</sup> The stock distribution scheme (SDO) in the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform law was a loophole that allowed landowners to distribute corporate share certificates in place of land to their tenants. The Philippine Supreme Court has ruled with finality in 2012 the return of the Hacienda land to the farmers. This came at great cost as the incumbent President B.S. Aquino influenced the legislature to impeach the sitting Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Renato Corona, and later convicted by the Philippine Senate on 29 May 2012.



was installed. Again, the primary beneficiaries of American ‘democracy’ were the *ilustrados*. In 1907, the first election in the Philippines was held with stringent voter requirements: only males aged above 23 years old who had held municipal offices before August 13, 1898, with real property worth at least 500 pesos or a paid tax of 30 pesos, and able to speak, read, and write in Spanish or English were qualified to vote<sup>113</sup> (Corpuz 1965, p. 98). These legal requirements for suffrage placed the *ilustrados* in a favourable position reinforcing and continuing their privilege of the previous colonial period into the politics of the new colonial order.

The American programme of improving public education proved to be most successful. The opportunity of free elementary and high school education was opened to all. This had the effect of expanding the middle class (Constantino 1978, p. 68). Education became a way out from poverty to social mobility. Educated Filipinos claimed a distinct social niche within the middle class serving as employees and managers of industry and trade controlled by the *principalia/ilustrados* who as continuing beneficiaries of the new colonial system transformed themselves into capitalists and owners of expanding business empires. The increase in the number of educated Filipinos produced a reliable bureaucracy running and managing the government and business

---

<sup>113</sup> Only three per cent of the population at that time could qualify to vote (Corpuz 1965, p. 99).

sectors. Education became an effective tool for promoting the American liberal-democratic ideal which came attached to imperial capitalism. Constantino (1978, p. 62) alluded to the educational programme as a colonial strategy of “Americanising” the elite, accomplishing for the Americans what religion accomplished for the Spaniards.

Before long, consciousness of the proven marketability of trained and skilled technocrats in gaining employment developed among educated Filipinos. Public educational institutions were unable to cope with the increasing number of young people desiring secondary and collegial education in the post-American era. Education offered respectable profit returns for possible investors and various privately owned secondary schools and colleges were founded to address the rising demand for education. The increased need for educational training was also due to the rapid rehabilitation efforts in most part of the world in the post WWII recovery. The high demand for skilled health professionals by the US and Europe in the 1960s and 1970s encouraged the opening of various nursing and medical schools all over the Philippines. The demand for engineers in the Middle East and Southeast Asia in the 1970s and 1980s induced large enrolments for engineering and technical courses in various colleges and universities. Mass production of educational training and skill geared towards the overseas job market rather than local labour

requirements became part of the educational agenda. Clearly, the massive migration of skilled and professional Filipinos to America, Europe, Middle East, East and Southeast Asia could not have happened without the educational infrastructure installed and encouraged during the American colonial era.

Notably, despite strong feelings of resentment against the Spanish friars, the majority of the population chose to remain Catholic. And while free public education was offered to everyone, the elite and the middle class opted to send their children to Catholic schools. In this way, Catholic education in the Philippines became a social signifier of class and prestige. The Church also continued to enjoy the privileges and entitlements of a majority religion, specifically tax exemptions for its charitable and educational institutions. More importantly, American public education allowed for a Catholic presence in public schools, enabling the Church to have a slot in the non-academic curriculum.<sup>114</sup> And while Protestants did gain ground in the American colonial period, the combined population among different denominations, even after more than a century of proselytising, is only about ten per cent of the population. Catholicism continues to be the religion of more than 80 per cent of Filipinos. Also, Protestant proselytising during the American colonial

---

<sup>114</sup> The privilege of religious education was open to all religious groups, but the Catholic Church had the advantage of having the organisation that extended to all parts of the Philippines.

period did not change the ambience of Catholic folk religious practices in Philippine towns and villages, especially the deeply entrenched tradition of the town *fiesta* and popular devotional practices honouring the *Santo Patron*.

### **Summary and conclusion**

The more than three centuries of Spanish colonisation configured Filipino lowland organisation and social relations. The colonial policy of the *reduccion* and the creation of the *pueblo* or the town centre ensured the conversion of the natives to Catholicism. Large land acquisitions helped by the *Patronato Real* and *encomienda* systems created a land-based class system of the elite class comprised of feudal landlords, landed friars, and Chinese mestizos; and the common *tao* comprised of tenants and farm workers. The wide gap or class divide between the rich and poor is a legacy of colonisation. The present servility of the Filipina domestic workers overseas evolved from pre-colonial slavery to domestic servitude for the ruling elite in the colonial and postcolonial period which has developed into an exportable commodity.

The most important contribution of American colonisation is neo-liberal democracy. The emergence of the educated middle-class during the American colonial period gave importance to education as a way to social ascendancy. The commercialisation of education to suit the global job market is a legacy of

American colonisation. The American educational curriculum provided most Filipinos with adequate fluency in English considered important by foreign employers in Asia, Europe and North America. In addition, the prevalence of private universities producing high numbers of graduates in engineering, IT, maritime, nursing, and medical courses to cater to the high demand in the international job market has been crucial to the continuing high levels of Filipino migration. In arguably a positive sense, the American colonial legacy of western education has allowed Filipinos to compete for overseas jobs.

In view of the thesis' focus on the role of religion in Filipino transnational migration and diaspora, the chapter emphasises folk Christianity as a legacy of Spanish colonisation. As migrant diasporic communities overseas initiate devotional practices and celebrate *fiesta* ritual celebrations, they highlight the connection between the Philippine historical context of colonization and Filipino transnational migration and settlement. Religion's significant role and influence continues in Philippine localities and has expanded to various migrant destination countries, including New Zealand and Singapore.

The next chapter's discussion provides a deeper discussion on folk religiosity, devotional practices, and *fiesta* rituals which are regular features of Filipino town life and culture, specifically those that are practiced in the diaspora.

## Chapter Four

### The Filipino family, folk devotions and *fiesta* tradition

#### Introduction:

*[T]he rural Filipino is not a mere passive recipient of religious ideas. He is also a creative innovator as attested by the way he selects, modifies, and elaborates those elements he draws from the Catholic Church to reinforce the structure of his culturally defined ways of doing things.*

Jocano (1981, p. 21)

The chapter deepens the discussion on the religious legacy of colonisation and draws attention to the process of Christianity's syncretic development as lowland indigenous ritual practices were assimilated into Catholicism's *fiesta* celebrations. The discussion in this chapter provides the backdrop for the ethnographic chapters on migrant performance of folk Christian rituals by looking at pre-hispanic indigenous rituals that had blended with Catholic *fiesta* rituals and its connection to indigenous culture.

According to Brah (1996, pp.18; 11) culture is "the embodiment, the chronicle of a group's history" and "[d]iaspora cultures ... mediate, in a lived tension, the experiences of separation and entanglement, of living here and remembering /desiring another place". This chapter foregrounds the discussion of Filipino migrant diaspora-homeland connection by presenting Filipino lowland cultural notions of social reciprocity called *utang na loob* that provides the normative

guideline for familial and social relations, which in this case include relations to supernatural beings (meaning God and the holy saints, and also spirits) mediated by symbolic representations (sacred icon and spirit manifestations or *paramdam*). It also includes a discussion of migrant notions of destiny (*kapalaran*), and luck (*swerte*) to provide a better understanding of migrant narratives in the ethnographic chapters.

According to Connerton (1989, p. 6) “all beginnings contain an element of recollection”, more so “when a social group makes a concerted effort to begin with a wholly new start.” I foreground the ritual characteristics that are of significance in understanding the ethnography of Filipino migrant diaspora *fiesta* rituals. I present four Filipino *fiestas* as they are performed and celebrated in their localities of origin, the *Santacruzán*, the *Ati-atihan* of Panay Island (fig. 4.1), the *Sinulog* of Cebu (fig. 4.2), and *Simbang Gabi*. Special attention shall be given to the *fiesta* ritual as a performance that is self-referencing, symbolic, and transformative. All the *fiestas* discussed in the chapter, except for *Ati-atihan*,<sup>115</sup> are included in the ethnographic accounts of Filipino migrants in New Zealand (Chapters Five and Six) and Singapore (Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine).

---

<sup>115</sup> The Filipino Artists in New Zealand listed the *Ati-atihan* in their 2010 performance calendar, presumably for the Philippine Independence Day celebration, which I was unable to observe.



4.1: Panay Island Map (Geocities 2011)



4.2: Visayas Map (Divesites in the Visayas 2011)

I include the *Ati-atihan* because it provides both a pre-colonial and colonial narrative account of the *fiesta* and hence important information on the ritual's syncretic or creolisation process. The *Sinulog* highlights Cebu's place as the first Christianised town in the Philippines. Its two folk narratives point to the significance of the sacred icon in the ritual as an efficacious basis for celebration and healing, another significant insight in understanding the role of the holy patron's sacred icons in the creolisation process of indigenous rituals.

Through the *fiesta* ritual discussion, I also look at the interconnection among Filipino lowland cosmology, folk Christianity, *fiesta* celebrations, family, and sacred icons, in order to provide a better understanding of migrant popular devotions and *fiesta* celebrations overseas.



### **Filipino lowland cosmology and folk Christianity**

Filipino Christianity fuses folk notions of *kapalaran* (destiny), *swerte* (luck), *bahala na* (divine providence), and *panata* (vows made to the Holy Patron in prayers) with Catholic beliefs and practices. Various migrant narratives presented in the ethnographic chapters point to an easy mix between Christianity and the pre-Christian native understanding of God. The indigenous God as creator and overseer of all worldly life remains embedded in Filipino language and expressions, thus figuring in Filipino quotidian interactions. Jocano (1981, p. 5) explains,

*Bathala* was said to be the creator of all things - the sky, the earth, the fauna and the flora. He dwelt in the highest realm of the eternal space called *kaluwalhatian* or sky. Just and merciful, he was said to be a sustainer, keeper, nourisher, and protector of mankind. Sometimes he seemed very human. He welcomed gifts from people with deep appreciation and was pleased when men were helpful and obedient to his moral laws. He was lavish towards those who kept his commandments and paid him homage. It is from this reassuring benevolence that the dominant risk-taking and venturesomeness (sic) trait of the Filipino arose - the *bahala na* or "*Bathala* will always take care."

*Bathala* is both powerful and generous.<sup>116</sup> There are two important supernatural blessings which *Bathala* metes out, destiny (*kapalaran*) and luck (*swerte*). *Kapalaran* or destiny "has been determined by God (*Bathala*) prior to one's birth and there is nothing a person could do to raise his/her status than

---

<sup>116</sup> It is important to note here that in terms of the qualities of being a good provider and bestower of blessings, there is a similarity between the the Filipino pre-Christian *Bathala*, and the Christian God, Father Son and Spirit.

that which had been already set” (De Mesa 2000, p. 75). *Kapalaran* also determines the length of one’s life, and how one’s life ends.

In the aftermath of a major 6.3 intensity earthquake in Christchurch at around 12:51 pm on 22 February 2011, a number of buildings collapsed in the CBD (Central Business District), one of them the CTV building, housing the King’s College, an English language school designed to prepare students and migrant professionals for the IELTS (International English Language Testing) examinations. At the time of the CTV’s collapse, about a dozen Filipino nurses were presumed to be attending English classes. Ten days after the earthquake, after an announcement was made by the government that it was shifting its operations from a “search and rescue” for survivors to “recovery” (of casualties) indicating a sense of resignation and acceptance that the possibility of survival for those who were still missing was almost nil, I had a telephone conversation with Mercy, a Filipina. From her, I learned that one Filipina originally thought to be among the missing was alive and well. Pondering on this, Mercy offered her reflexive interpretation of life and death:

If it’s really your time, it’s really your time. One of the nurses in the group got sick, that’s why she was absent from the class that day. She asked to be excused because she could not go to class that day. See how the one who was sick, is the one who survived, and the ones who were healthy, they were the ones who died.

That's why, whatever it is you do, if it's your time (to die), it's your time.<sup>117</sup> (parentheses mine)

Mercy's view implies that the length of one's life and the time of one's death are pre-ordained.

But while the idea of destiny may be interpreted as fatalistic and rigid, in the Filipino mind it is not absolutely so. Destiny has two polarities which provide a counterpoint to each other. On the one hand destiny is a given, and it cannot be changed. On the other hand it is a mystery. No one really knows what each one's destiny is until it happens or unfolds. Thus, the only way of dealing with the mystery of one's destiny is to discover it by adventurous exploration. To test one's destiny is to take a chance. The popular Filipino expression *bahala na*,<sup>118</sup> which means 'whatever happens, happens,' 'come what may,' or 'God will take care,' is used by Filipinos in the face of doubt, uncertainty or adversity, reflecting the willingness to take a risk because one's destiny is pre-ordained. In this logic, disaster can happen even when one is at home, thus playing safe does not work. This partly explains why Filipino migration continues unabated despite the Philippine media's exposure of migrant exploitation, inhumane treatment (or even murder) and trafficking for slave

---

<sup>117</sup> Original text in Appendix B: Chapter 4.1

<sup>118</sup> While *bahala na* has been a popular and much talked about cultural trait among Filipinos, this is not matched by available literature except for a few Filipino theology and philosophy scholars like De Mesa (1979); Quito (1994); Gorospe (1994) and Gripaldo (2005).

labour and sex work. Sarah, a domestic worker, came to Singapore a year after Flor Contemplacion was hanged, believing that each one's destiny is unique, and that hers will be different from Flor's (see pp. 101-102, 361).

Benefits and favours depend on the quality of one's relationship with God and other supernatural beings. Jocano (1981, pp.16-17; 25) explains:

[P]rior to the coming of Christianity, there existed among the different ethnic groups in the archipelago established belief systems having to do with man's relations with the spirit world. The universe was seen as an hierarchically structured domain: the skyworld, the earth world and the lowerworld. Each of these "worlds" was inhabited by spirits who maintained close relationships with the humans. These relations were manifested in two important events in man's life: good luck and misfortunes. Man enjoyed good luck for as long as he had the favors of the gods; he suffered from misfortunes if such favors were removed.

Good luck and misfortune may be determined by human-supernatural relations. There are three points in Jocano's reading of Filipino folk beliefs that needs some elaboration. The first is about the spirits, some of them of ancestors, relatives or kin who have died, who maintain close relationships with humans. There is a popular belief that while souls go to heaven after death, they remain accessible to human communications or supplication through the *paramdam* (to make one's presence felt). The root word of *paramdam* is *ramdam* which is to feel, thus the special reference for the deceased to make himself/herself felt is *paramdam*. The dead may

communicate with the living and vice-versa. Stories about deceased family, kin and friends, immediately following their death, are myriad, especially those that describe how the deceased person lets himself /herself be felt by those he/she considers close. When my sister passed away in October 2010, a friend, Santie told me that she would not be able to attend her funeral mass and sent her apologies. But on the day of the funeral, she showed up. She told me that she was wakened by the alarm of her cell phone, not just once, but twice. She insisted that she had never set the alarm because she wanted to sleep late. The first time it rang, she turned it off. But curiously, it rang again, so interpreting it as a *paramdam* by Ate Gene, she said, “Alright, Ate Gene, I am coming to your funeral.” The prevalence of belief about the connections between the spirit of the deceased and the living continues even among the new generation Filipinos. In 2011 July, I received an e-mail from Carmita detailing her young grandson’s first experience of grief upon learning of an old priest’s passing away:

Last Thursday, Leo came home and told us about the death of his favourite priest at SBC (a school) named Fr. Jacob due to complication with diabetes aside from old age. By the looks of it, he was deeply affected. These are some of the things he shared with me on the day that Fr. Jacob died:

1. A friend-priest of Fr. Jacob got a missed call from him.  
*I told Leo that chances are somebody mistakenly pressed the friend-priest’s name on Fr. Jacob’s phone and Leo immediately replied, “But Fr. Jacob’s phone was in his bag in the hospital”.*

2. Well, I don't think you can call the 2<sup>nd</sup> incident mistakenly pressed again: Fr. Jacob's favorite janitor, not knowing about his death, received a text from him asking that they meet at the canteen.
3. On the day Fr. Jacob died, there was a butterfly flying around their classroom. *(Leo is used to having a brown butterfly or moth everytime lola Yanang's (my mother) birthday or death anniversary is near ....*<sup>119</sup>

What these narratives mean is that ordinarily, for Filipinos, the world of the dead and the living intersect and overlap on certain occasions, and that familial and social relationships do not cease with the cessation of mortal life. Worth noting is the belief that other living beings, like butterfly, become the physical manifestations of the soul of the departed. It is interesting that the narratives of Santie and Leo about Ate Gene's and Fr. Jacob's *paramdams*, show that spirits are keeping up with technology, as both of the deceased used the cell phone to communicate with the living.

The second significant folk notion Jocano (1981) points out is that the universe is a hierarchically structured domain. Saldy, a healer in Quezon City I interviewed in 2006 for a paper on folklore, affirmed a three-world spirit paradigm: the sky-world, the earth-world and lower-world. The skyworld belongs to the holy ones led by God. Some of the spirits belonging to the skyworld are sacred beings and therefore superior to the earth-world and

---

<sup>119</sup> The original e-mail is reproduced here with Carmita's consent except for some minor changes in the format.

lower-world spirits, some of which can be ‘naughty’, or evil, and are capable of inflicting harm or sickness on humans by casting spells or even worse enticing them into the underworld and thus cause death. Rafael (2001, p. 114), explains:

Spirits could appear anywhere at any time. They had no specific names and their genealogies were indeterminate. Their places of residence varied and their origins were essentially unknown. *Nono* (Tagalog reference for spirit) was thus a way of designating what eluded naming. It was a means of identifying the source of events and occurrences that seemed to defy explanation. Phenomena that cannot be accounted for are potential producers of shock in that they rupture the rhythm of everyday life. (Parenthesis and italics mine)

The *Nono* are earth-world spirits who inhabit the same material world but are invisible. And because they cannot be seen, it may be possible for human beings to harm, hurt or offend them unknowingly. Thus, when wandering in a secluded area, one needs to notify or ask the permission of the *Nono*. The point here is that hierarchy and stratification is also present in the spirit world, and that both the holy, earthworld and evil spirits are present in the world, and are engaged as agents or mediators of events and occurrences in human life. Worth noting is that the word for ancestor in Tagalog is *ninuno*, the root word of which is *nono*, meaning, spirit, implying the presence of the ancestors in the spirit world. Unexpected sickness, a bad accident or untimely death may be explained through destiny, luck or bad luck meted out by supernatural beings and thus fit into a general framework of a world that makes sense.

One may ask whether modernity and migration affect Filipino migrant perception about a spirit-filled world. In a chaplaincy gathering, a portion of my food accidentally dropped on the floor. As I bent down to pick it up, a Filipina, Crystal, stopped me, saying:

Just don't pick it up, Jo. There are people asking for food... those we cannot see. They also want to eat with us... because they have been forgotten... It is just right for us to give them (food).<sup>120</sup>

Surprised, I was not quite sure whether it was a joke, but she did not give the usual Filipino aside, *joke only*, (*pang-loko lang*, *dyok lang* or *biro lang*). When I continued bending down to pick it up, she gave an admonition, "Careful, they may get angry ... that may be accompanied by misfortune..."<sup>121</sup> Apparently, even in the middle of the day (we were having lunch), and right after a Christian ritual (the lunch followed the Chaplaincy mass), the spirits freely roam in that Christchurch human space and are desirous of some form of engagement. They also indicate or manifest 'signs' about what they want, like food falling from one's plate, and would be offended if that sign is not heeded. It is worth noting then that food, aside from being an important dimension in social relations, also plays an important part in spirit-human relations. Some Filipino healing rituals require the offering of food called *atang*.

---

<sup>120</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 4.2

<sup>121</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 4.3



The admonition about misfortune from a migrant in Christchurch illustrates the third point, the presence of misfortune (*malas*) and luck (*swerte*) in life. This is connected to Filipino folk religiosity's ways of acquiring the good graces of God. Living a good life is seen as the best way, but not necessarily a sure assurance of a grief-free life. Thus, to augment one's chances of getting *swerte*, prayers and rituals are performed. When Filipinos were Christianised, the converts fused indigenous cosmology and ritual practices with Catholicism. Jocano (1981, p. 25) explains,

The introduction of saints, prayers, and other Christian religious paraphernalia such as the cross, palm leaves, holy water, etc., is one way of elaborating and making the ritual more pleasing to the supernatural powers, of acquiring more spiritual partners in the pursuit of life goals. To a certain extent the environmental spirits have been replaced by saints and the indigenous prayers by the Christian prayers but the underlying concepts remain intact in that the imperatives of local beliefs and practices still provide the people with proper ritual contexture of economic propositions in seeking the goodwill and assistance of the supernatural.

It may well be important to remember that while the Christian God brought by the colonisers was portrayed as benevolent and accessible to human beings, this is filtered by the ordinary *tao*'s context of experience and understanding of stratified dichotomies, Spaniard-*Indio*, *principalia/illustratado-tao*. From their experiences of stratified inequality, the common *tao* see the need for an influential ally among the holy patrons and saints in seeking favours. Individual and communal rituals performed in their honour are meant to please

them so they may carry the favours asked of them to God who will then grant them. Jocano (1969, p. 13) notes the continuing adherence to folk Christian practices among rural and urban Filipino communities:

This recourse to local practices suggests that in spite of outward manifestation of adherence to Christianity, traditional religion still plays a significant role in the lives of the people. Many local activities associated with planting, harvesting, and storing of crops, building houses, treating the sick, and getting married are based on popular beliefs sanctioned by the local culture but not necessarily by either the Catholic or Protestant religion.

The practice of indigenous rituals is also widespread among urban Filipinos, and more importantly, for this thesis, among Filipino migrants. Religion through folk Christianity, as will be shown by the succeeding ethnography of Filipinos in New Zealand and Singapore, aid and support Filipino transnational migration. Filipino migrants when faced with migration possibilities, perform novena prayers and rituals in honour of their favourite saints and holy patrons, often with supportive family members, for a favourable outcome of job and visa applications, indicating a “God assisted” exercise of agency.

Folk belief in a world inhabited by invisible beings or spirits is extensive among Asian cultures and human-spirit/supernatural relations and engagement has been noted, for example, in Sri Lanka (Kapferer 1983, 1979 ), India (Reiniche 1993), Korea (Yi 1988), Malaysia (Ong 1987) and Vietnam (Thien

2003). Generally there are two kinds of spirits who have opposite effects on humans. The first are good spirits which offer guidance, comfort and benefits. The other kinds are demonic or evil spirits inflicting harm on humans.

The notion of destiny is also common among Africans. The Tallensi believed in a destiny configured by their ancestors (Fortes 1960). Nigerian Muslims believe in *Insha' Allah*, God's will, meaning that "life is steered ... into the predetermined pattern laid down by God" (Yamba 1995, p. 159). While the common perception of Hinduism's karmic destiny appears to be fixed, it is hedged with secondary elaborations of belief<sup>122</sup> which means that it has not remained entirely unchallenged. This is shown by Indian folk tales engaging fate's rigidity in a contest of wit and resolve (Kent 2009, p. 2). In contrast to the Indian resort to wit to 'change' destiny, Filipinos instead appeal to God, because God is seen as compassionate, *may awa ang Diyos*, who is moved by human need and suffering. One may also seek an ally among the saints or patrons to appeal one's situation to God (as like a lawyer arguing for a client). Or one may also offer a vow [*panata* (Tagalog), *panaad* (Cebuano), *promesa* (Bicol)] to God to show the sincerity of one's intention, in exchange for the favours being asked (Mateo 2003), an acceptable practice in lowland divine reciprocity.

---

<sup>122</sup> Evans-Pritchard (1976) notes that "further elaborations of belief free the Azande from having to admit what appear to be to us the logical consequence of belief in bilogical transmission of witchcraft."

Arguably, the foundational value and cultural principle in Filipino lowland reciprocity is the notion of *utang na loob*<sup>123</sup> (based on the *Tagalog* linguistic source) or *utang na kabubut-on* or *utang nga kabaraslan* among Visayans (Jocano 1981, p. 56; Dancel 2005). The folk religious practice of *panata* or vow highlights existing reciprocal relations between God and people based on *utang na lob*. Hollnsteiner (1970, pp.70-71) explains:

*Utang na loob* reciprocity is an ancient Filipino operating principle... Every Filipino is expected to possess *utang na loob*; that is, he should be aware of his obligations to those from whom he receives favors and should repay them in an acceptable manner... One cannot actually measure the repayment but can attempt to make it... Some services can never be repaid. Saving a person's life would be one of these... The parent-child *utang-na-loob* is complementary rather than reciprocal. For parents never develop *utang na loob* toward their children. They have the duty to rear them which is complemented by the children's obligation to respect and obey their parents and show their gratitude by taking care of them in their old age. (italics mine)

In the same way that children cannot repay their parents, no one can really repay God for the blessing of life and creation. But 'small tokens' are possible, like making a vow or *panata*. Cannell (1999, p. 188) explains:

*Promesas* are vows to perform a particular devotion or 'sacrifice' (*sacrificio*) to Christ. They are made when someone is ill; they may be made by a sick person on their own account, or on someone else's. In Bicol, they are made especially by parents for sick children ... everyone agrees that the main burden falls on

---

<sup>123</sup> The Filipino's *loob* (*kalooban* and *utang na loob*) is considered an important concept in understanding Filipino social behaviour and community interaction by Filipino social scientists, like Iletto ([1979] 2008, 1998), Rafael (2001, 1987), Hollnsteiner (1970) and Jocano (1998, 1981, 1969). The much used English translations for *utang na loob* are: debt of gratitude, debt of goodwill and interior debt which according to Dancel (2005) while denoting a general idea of the word, still fall short of the complexity and cultural nuances of the word.

the mothers because 'it is women who look after the sick'...  
(italics mine)

The special burden on women to pray for healing in this case is similar to Orsi's (1989) observation of a highly feminised American devotion to St. Jude in Chicago, wherein women prayed for their husbands, sons, brothers and fiances, and for healing.

In the Philippines, national shrines for various saints are pilgrimage sites for devotees with serious petitions. Devotees whose supplications are granted take pains to fulfill their *panata*. This illustrates the complementary reciprocal relations between the sacred (holy patrons) and the people. Turner (1973, pp. 197-198) mentions a similar practice of making vows among the Chinese of north China during a pilgrimage: the *hsu yilan* vows that should the wish come true, worship and sacrifice will be offered, while the *huan yiian* vow is given in gratitude for a favourable answer to supplications, like recovery from an ailment, prosperity, or begetting of a male heir. The *panata* is also performed by Filipino migrants in New Zealand and Singapore. Before migrating, a *panata* is made as they performed novena prayers for a successful migration. God's answer is seen in terms of an overseas employment offer and visa approval. Vows come in different forms, for example an annual participation in a religious ritual, like Estela, a Filipina *Simbang Gabi* participant in

Singapore (see pp. 446-447). Filipina domestic workers attributed their luck at finding a husband, good job, well dispositioned employer, or escape from a bad one, and healing, to prayers and clearly demonstrated the power of God (see pp. 360-377). Some migrant vows were made in terms of introducing new rituals, like performing and sponsoring an annual novena and *fiesta* in honour of saints in the diaspora. For example, a Filipina New Zealand bride, Francie, who was diagnosed with a grave ailment, made a novena to St. Anthony of Padua to be healed vowing to have an annual novena and the *fiesta* celebration in honour of the saint if her prayer was granted. Francie did get well, so every year, she invites her friends to pray the novena and celebrate St. Anthony's *fiesta* in her Christchurch home in thanksgiving, as promised. The *Sinulog fiesta* celebration in Christchurch was initiated by Magda, a Filipina bride in gratitude for being granted a New Zealand visa and marriage to a good New Zealand husband (see p. 305). The *Sinulog fiesta* in Auckland was initiated by Amanda and Gerard in thanksgiving for various blessings granted by the *Santo Niño* before and after their migration to New Zealand, for example, Amanda's successful employment and healing (see pp. 315-316).

Among Filipinos the vows are performed with affect. Filipino devotees' *panata* prayer supplications may be accompanied by a donation<sup>124</sup> as a sign of care and goodwill, though it is not required, or by small tokens of sacrifice and affection. The lighting of candles, and kissing/touching the holy icons, either with the supplicant's bare hands or rubbing the icon with a handkerchief while praying are a few of the ordinary individual practices of devotion.<sup>125</sup> Through these ritualised actions, devotees establish porous boundaries between their mortal selves and the immortal sacred. Devotees are engaged and connected with the divine, and to touch the icon is to 'touch the divine.'

### **Filipino family and sacred icons**

A key feature of Filipino folk devotional spirituality is that a significant number of sacred icons are not lodged in churches but reside in private homes under the care of families from generation to generation (Cannell 1995, p. 379). Since families have private altars in the home, Filipino families actually live with sacred icons, which are mostly small replicas of the shrine icons while some are bigger icons used in processions. In her ethnography of a Bicol village in lowland Philippines, Cannell (1995, p. 379) observes that the sacred icon, *Ama* is "personalized and humanized" and is "in a literal sense integrated

---

<sup>124</sup> There is a common practice of giving donations either in cash or food items to the religious order or congregation in charge of the shrines as an advanced token of gratitude for granting petitions.

<sup>125</sup> This is shown in Jocano's (1981) account of urban and rural Filipino folk religious practices.

into a Bicol family”.<sup>126</sup> *Ama* is bathed, rubbed dry, dressed, perfumed, affectionately kissed and touched. The intimate ‘icon-as-part-of-the-family/community’ relationship is cultivated through generations and forms an intense and embodied connection and attachment to the icon (Massumi 1988; Shouse 2005; Thrift 2008). Jocano’s (1981, pp. 35-37) ethnographic description of urban Filipino devotees’ practice of touching, wiping and kissing the Black Nazarene in Quiapo connects with Cannell’s (1995, pp. 379-383) account of the Bicolano’s intimate connection and relationship with *Ama*.

I find that there are similarities between the rural and urban lowland indigenous practice of performing ritual offering of gifts to the spirits and the *panata* of migrants in the diaspora through ritual performance of the novena or prayer supplications accompanied by “gifts” in kind or cash (for the keepers of the shrines of the holy patron). The distinction lies, in my opinion, in the degree or level of relationship. The spirits live in open spaces, untamed, and may pose a risk. The relationship is therefore impersonal (even fearful) rather than affective. In contrast, folk Christianity’s relationship between devotee and sacred icon is based on reciprocity and is more affectively intimate.

---

<sup>126</sup> *Ama* is the formal reference to father in the Bicol region and *Amang Hinulid* literally means ‘father who is laid out in death’.



Folk religiosity is also immersed in seemingly secular practices like inheritance and land sharing. Cannel (1999, 1995) notes that sacred icons in Bicol are inherited in a manner that followed the practice of land sharing called *paralibot*. Farming land is usually distributed among the children of the owner (*may sadiri*). In cases where the land is too small to be partitioned, the planting and harvesting is rotated on a yearly basis among the children, allowing the siblings to take turns at planting and harvesting, and if the family has a sacred icon of devotion in their charge, the one in charge of planting also takes care of the saint or icon (Cannel 1999, p. 185). In the practice of *paralibot*, the sharing of sacred icons is a reflection of family economic structuring and thus facilitates family and community unity and solidarity. Filipino migrants in New Zealand and Singapore exhibit the same affective regard for sacred icons. The founders of the *Sinulog fiesta* in Christchurch and Auckland have taken their family sacred icons along their transnational journey (see p. 314). A Filipina bride in the South Island carried the family sacred icon to New Zealand and proudly displayed it in her home. Filipinas in Singapore carry rosaries and their favourite sacred icons along their persons (worn as necklaces, bracelets, rings, or secured in their bags or purses). In this sense, religious symbols accompany the Filipino migrants' transnational journey and are part of their diasporic existence. Similar to the practice of rotating sacred icons among siblings or family members in the Philippines,

migrants in New Zealand and Singapore replicate the practice of rotating sacred icons among themselves. The weekly rotation of sacred icons among Filipino families indicates that they ‘belong’ to the community. In addition, sacred icons play a central role in the Filipino migrant celebration of *fiestas*, as shown in the ethnographic chapters. Sacred icons provide Filipino migrants the “capacity to make meaning... with the means to express the particular meanings which the community has for them” (Cohen 1985, p. 19) in a foreign land. Sacred icons are key symbols around which an imagined Filipino identity may be constructed and community unity forged overseas.

### **Popular devotions and the *fiesta***

Folk Christianity’s devotional practices are distinct from but at the same time connected to the *fiesta*. The favourite saint or holy patron is honoured by its devotees through novenas, devotional prayers offered weekly to the holy patron in the church invoking assistance for various concerns. Aside from the hometown *Santo Patron*, weekly devotional novenas may be offered to other holy patrons for special needs. The most popular devotions are those for the Mother of Perpetual Help<sup>127</sup> (fig. 4.3), on Wednesdays, St. Jude Thaddeus<sup>128</sup> (fig. 4.4) known as the patron saint for desperate cases, on Thursdays, and

---

<sup>127</sup> She is the special patroness of the family and home, as well as those in need of a mother’s direction and help.

<sup>128</sup> He is traditionally known as son of Alpheus [or Cleophas] brother of St. Joseph, the foster father of Jesus; the letter of Jude, one of the epistles in the Christian Scriptures is attributed to him.

those for the Black Nazarene<sup>129</sup>, popular for work, relational and health matters, on Fridays (fig. 4.5).



The *Santo Niño* (fig. 4.6) novena on Fridays is popular among those asking for healing, financial help and children,<sup>130</sup> while those for Our Lady of Lourdes (fig. 4.7) and Fatima (fig. 4.8) are held on Saturdays. Folk Christianity's devotion to the holy patron is foundational to the *fiesta*. The two overlap because *fiesta* rituals include a nine day novena for the town's holy patron, and also because most of the time, the sacred icons which are the objects of devotions are part of the *fiesta* processions.

<sup>129</sup> The Black Nazarene, a darkened icon of a bleeding Jesus with a crown of thorn carrying the cross, is especially popular among Filipino men. The 2012 Black Nazarene *fiesta* procession attracted about 8 million devotees, despite a terrorist threat announced by the President, and lasted a record of 22 hours.

<sup>130</sup> The *Santo Niño* national shrine is in Cebu City.

4.5 The Black Nazarene (Wikipedia 2011)

4.6 The *Santo Niño* de Cebu (Paulus blog 2011)

4.7: Our Lady of Fatima (Connectin 2011)



4.8: Our Lady of Lourdes (Photobucket 2011)



Folk Christianity is especially more pronounced among rural and farming communities. Jocano (1969, pp. 18-43), in his fieldwork among rural farmers noted how Catholicism blended with local farming and fishing practices

resulting in rituals that satisfied the quotidian needs of farmers and fishermen.

Ileto ([1979] 2008, p. 11-2) points out,

[T]he fact has to be accepted that the majority of the lowland Filipinos were converted to Spanish Catholicism. But like other regions of Southeast Asia which “domesticated” Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, and Islamic influences, the Philippines, despite the fact that Catholicism was more often than not imposed on it by Spanish missionaries, creatively evolved its own brand of folk Christianity...

Folk Christianity’s creative development of Catholicism (and even Protestantism) remains for the most part outside the sphere of church control. However popular, folk religiosity remains marginal within the Catholic Church, its wide observance not meriting much attention and recognition either in the theological or doctrinal conversations, indicating a wide divide between the Church’s official theology and doctrine and the expressions of piety of ordinary Catholics. Most attention among Christian theologians and historians centre on whether ‘Filipinos had been truly Christianized, or ...Christianity had simply been Filipinized’<sup>131</sup> (De Mesa 2000; see also Larkin 1982, p. 604, who coins *Philippinization*, to refer to native religious practices aimed at the subversion and rejection of the Spanish culture), a question which arguably may have some grounds if authentic Christianity meant strict adherence to Western Catholic practices, rather than appreciating folk Christianity’s place in the gospel story and the salvific mission of the Church.

---

<sup>131</sup> Electronic journal: East Asian Pastoral Review, 2000, 31(1) accessed 2009-04-16 at website: <http://eapi.admu.edu.ph/eapr00/mesa.htm>

But while for the most part folk Christianity is largely ignored or even discouraged, it continues to be popular among Catholics and this is so even in the most developed and industrialised nations. Catholic theologian Peter Phan (1995)<sup>132</sup> cites the dissatisfaction with the Roman rites' somber linear rationality for the Catholic laity's preference for popular religion, which emphasises spontaneity, festivity, joyfulness and community.

The existing gap between 'official' and 'popular' spiritualities is expressed spatially and metaphorically. Control and ownership of all sacred shrines and parish churches belong exclusively to the official hierarchical leadership, alongside the regulation of all rituals conducted on Church grounds. The *Sinulog* devotional dance performed by the *tinderas* (candle vendors) for pilgrim petitions in Cebu is not allowed inside the Church, and thus the *tinderas* upon the request of the pilgrims perform the ritual on the sidewalk (Ness 1995, 1992). Functionally, the ordained clergy leads and the ordinary faithful follow (or at least are supposed to follow). The place of the laity in the church according to one priestly jest is to 'pray and pay'. The gap<sup>133</sup> also calls to mind other existing dualisms in church theology and structure: soul-body,

---

<sup>132</sup> Electronic journal: East Asian Pastoral Review 2000 Volume 37 Number 1, accessed 2009-04-16 at website: <http://eapi.admu.edu.ph/eapr005/peter%20phan.htm>

<sup>133</sup> The Church's organisational set-up reflects the wide gap between the *soyales* (elite) and the *masa* (ordinary folks). Church leaders mostly coming from the elite in general view the ordinary masses as lacking education and Christian formation, and therefore gullible to extreme fanaticism, e.g., devotional acts causing self-inflicted physical pain and superstitions.

sacred-secular, ordained-non-ordained, male-female, priest-layperson. The official-popular divide persists to this day, albeit subtly. Individual shows of religiosity and piety inside churches and shrines are mostly tolerated rather than encouraged (Jocano 1981, pp. 28; 37-38). The Church is aware that lay devotional piety translates into material benefits. Significant funds coming from pilgrim devotees' donations and gifts to the holy patrons of the shrines continue to fill church coffers, providing funds for various pastoral programmes and ministries, as well as priestly needs, even some luxuries for the official leaders of the church ordinarily beyond reach of the ordinary Filipino faithful. The relevance of the Catholic Church among migrants hinges primarily on migrant memory of the Church's familiar presence in the homeland landscape and its central role in the community *fiestas*. While regular Chaplaincy masses gather regular attendees, Filipino chaplains soon realise that these rituals are not attractive enough in gathering most Filipino migrants. Thus, while folk Christianity's devotional practices are merely tolerated but not encouraged among parishes in the Philippines, Filipino chaplains in New Zealand and Singapore, in order to be able gather a large crowd of Filipino migrants, have lent their full support to the *fiesta* organisers to rally participation in the rituals.

While religion regarded as practice is social and creates venues for social interaction and identity construction, religion as belief, ritually expressed, is “postulated to have consequences beyond [its] social effects” (Moore and Myerhoff 1977, p. 13). Jocano (1981, pp. 23-42), citing his observations of folk Christian rituals within the *fiesta*, concluded that *fiestas* are “more social than religious.” However, some ethnographic accounts cited in his study may be discerned as challenging that conclusion. In his ethnography of the *Santo Niño* icon’s ritual bathing, the water used in bathing the wooden statue was given to guests as a healing agent. Also, his account of the *patapak* ritual notes that the *Santo Niño* icon is placed on the devotee’s head or rubbed on devotees’ bodies for healing, illustrating the popular belief in the icon’s curative power. In both cases, the rituals indicate a numinous value beyond the social to the devotees. While performance and participation in rituals are social, they also simultaneously point to the devotee’s personal affect and orientation towards the sacred, and the role of sacred symbols in mediating the fulfillment of such longing. The Filipino longing for the sacred is shown to be oriented towards its manifold iconic representations. As the material humanized form of the invisible sacred, the sacred icon makes visible the invisible to human sight, making the sacred accessible to affective tactile expressions. This affection for the sacred is seen in the assimilation of sacred symbols into Filipino migrant homes, and on their own persons. As previously



mentioned, sacred icons are taken along by Filipino migrants in the transnational journey to be later enthroned in a new home. This is significant in the thesis' exploration of the role of religion in Filipino transnational migration in New Zealand and Singapore as it points to a significant connection between homeland religious practice and diasporic rituals. Sacred icons are central to the Filipino migrant performance of devotional rituals and *fiesta* celebrations, for example, the above mentioned *patapak* ritual is performed in Auckland (see p. 322). As will be shown in the ethnographic accounts, the rotation of sacred icons among Filipino homes, and their central role in *fiesta* celebrations are foundational in building community solidarity and identity among Filipino migrants in New Zealand and Singapore.

Devotional religious practices continue in the Catholic world even among those in highly industrialized and developed countries like Spain and Italy. With the advent of migration, popular devotions have gone on a transnational journey accompanying diasporic communities overseas. Orsi's (1985) study of Italian Catholic immigrants highlighted the *fiesta* celebration of Our Lady of Mount Carmel with the procession by *La Madonna* as an identity marker of the Italian-American diaspora in Harlem, New York. Tweed's (1997) study of Cuban migrant exiles in Florida, showed how the *fiesta* of Our Lady of Charity, the Cuban national patroness, in Florida has become a symbol of

unity among exiled Cubans in the U.S. Paerregaard's (2008, 2005) study of Peruvian immigrants in the United States, Spain, Italy, Argentina and Japan showcase the procession of *Our Lord of Miracles* as an important identity marker of the diaspora everywhere. All the aforementioned Christian diasporas exhibit similar devotional expressions towards their holy patrons. Migrant religious expressions through public rituals are not limited to Christians. Werbner's (1996) study of the Sufi Muslim Pakistanis in the United Kingdom describes the community's actions in sacralising the streets of migrant cities for *Allah* in annual commemorative processions in honour of the Prophet and of the order's departed saint.

Ironically, despite the fact there is a *fiesta* in every village, town, district and city among lowland localities in the whole Philippine archipelago,<sup>134</sup> there is a notable scarcity of ethnographic literature on the town *fiesta*. Significant ethnographies on the *fiesta* have been written by Frank Lynch ([1962] 2004), an American anthropologist who made the study of Filipino values and culture his lifetime work, and two Filipino anthropologists, F. Landa Jocano (1981) who paid particular attention to the *fiesta* practices in the Visayas and Tagalog regions and Raul Pertierra (1995) whose study focused on the *fiesta* of a small

---

<sup>134</sup> *Fiestas* in Spain and South America have been the popular subject of interdisciplinary studies. However, Mexico's *fiestas* have undoubtedly attracted the most scholarly attention, to cite a few: Bushnell (1958); Gonzalez (1999); Monaghan (1996); Napolitano (1997); Vogt and Bricker (1996); and Wolf (1958).

locality in northern Luzon.<sup>135</sup> Lynch ([1962] 2004, p. 220) provides a comprehensive definition of the *fiesta*:

[T]he *fiesta*, as it exists today, is an organic unity composed of heterogenous elements which can be profitably and separately clustered according to the agency which typically sponsors them... one can speak of the "*fiesta* proper" typically organized or supervised by the parish priest, and of the "*feria*" which is typically organized by civic officials and prominent laymen... activities constituting the *fiesta* proper would be all church functions and church-sponsored or religious entertainment. The *feria* includes the sports, dances, plays, variety shows, raffles, beauty contest, gambling, commercial activities, carnival. Such a division has historical weight (the Spanish *fiesta* vs. *feria*) and is the distinction made by Filipinos themselves ... (italics mine)

In fact, the *fiesta* then does not only pertain to the sacred or sacred-oriented activities in the church, but also includes carnival-like events and practices. This is similar to Bahktin's (1984, p. 5) observation that in medieval Europe "nearly every Church feast had its comic folk aspect, which was also traditionally recognized." Hence, the *fiesta* is a ritual that connects the Church and the people. The *fiesta* has a three-fold effect: fulfill the community's obligation to its heavenly patron; renew the spiritual life of the individual; and renew the individual's membership in the Church community (Lynch [1984] 2004, p. 233). The *fiesta* affirms intersubjective relations between humans and sacred beings through religious rituals like novenas and procession, and among community members through carnivalesque merry-making. The

---

<sup>135</sup> Jocano (1981) explores Filipino Folk Christianity and establishes a connection between folk Christianity and *fiesta* celebration rituals. Pertierra (1995) follows an Ilocano locality's (a well-known migrant sending region) *fiesta* preparations highlighting community relations, networks and power relations.

longing to affirm connection with the sacred does not, after all, diminish one's connection to others, much less lessen the desire for luxury foods, visual and audio entertainment, and dance. In this sense the *fiesta* ritual illustrates the totality of life, and embeds the ritual in Filipino lowland ways of living. The *fiesta-feria* connection is spatially manifested in most Catholic shrines in the Philippines, where food and entertainment are provided for pilgrims and devotees. Of course, as with the notion of destiny, the carnivalesque quality of a religious site and event is in no way uniquely Filipino. Turner (1973, p. 208) visited pilgrim sites in Mexico and Latin American countries, the U.S., Canada, India and the Philippines and made this observation:

At all the pilgrimage centers I visited there was dancing by brightly feathered troupes of traditional performers. Often there were rodeos, bullfights, and fairs with Ferris wheels and roundabouts; and always there were innumerable stalls and marquees where almost everything could be had, from religious pictures and objects to confectionery, food, clothing, and domestic utensils. Communion, marketing, the fair, all went together in a place set apart.

Mainly because it is celebrated by the whole town or village community, even if the *fiesta* is “religiously meaningful only to Catholics,” it is also “participated in and enjoyed by non-Catholics” (Pertierra 1995, p. 42). In some small localities, Protestants even take an active part in local rituals (Jocano 1981, p. 54). Lynch ([1962] 2004, p. 219), argues:

Because the annual *fiesta* has become in the Philippines such a highly elaborate complex of social activities - ritual,

recreational, and economic - it deserves special treatment in any discussion of Philippine culture. (italics mine)

As a public ritual the *fiesta* provides, a sense of seasonal regularity and ‘normality’ to the quotidian life of every Philippine town and village, and thus, a rich “semiotic device” (Geertz 1976, p. 228) for understanding Filipino lowland cultures and, by extension diaspora culture, as shown in the ethnographic chapters.

Because the *fiesta* is a legacy of Filipino colonial history, traditional roles remain in the ritual; while the privileged class (*hermanos/hermanas mayores* mostly coming from the elite or landed class) take the centre stage, the ordinary folks make up the crowd of enthusiastic audience. However, while it would seem that the town *cabecera fiesta* is mostly a church and elite class joint project, there are also spaces for the common *tao*’s interpretation and appropriation of meaning. The elite and common folk usually are all devotees of the town’s holy patron and therefore willingly offer *panata* and participate in the novena. *Fiesta* celebrations are thus able to draw participation from a wide range of individuals, families and communities, making it an important venue for the expression and construction of collective identity.

I agree with Lynch's [1962] 2004) view that the *fiesta* deserves special treatment in any discussion of Filipino cultures. The *fiesta* ritual performance intertwines with the historical narratives of Philippine lowland cultures. Its celebration and performance in the Philippine hometowns and the diaspora mixes colonial history with indigenous cosmology and praxes.

### **Filipino lowland cosmology and the *fiesta* ritual**

Anthropologists<sup>136</sup> in different ways point out that the analysis of social life requires first and foremost an understanding of key cultural tropes -- symbols, images, myths, kinship terms, genealogies, legal concepts and so forth.

According to Geertz (1973, p. 127):

[R]eligious symbols, dramatized in rituals or related in myths, are felt somehow to sum up, for those they are resonant, what is known about the way the world is, the quality of the emotional life it supports, and the way one ought to behave while in it. Sacred symbols thus relate an ontology and cosmology to aesthetics and a morality...

Ritual fuses "the world as lived and the world as imagined ... under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms" (ibid. p. 112). It is as much an expression of the ethos of beliefs or cosmology, and of the basic realities of a lived experience.

---

<sup>136</sup> Such as Evans-Pritchard (1962), Fortes (1960), Gluckman (1962), Levi-Strauss ([1985]1988), Ortner (1973), Turner (1975), and Wolf (1958)

In their foundational texts, the anthropological discourse on diaspora locates religion as an integral part of its conceptual development and its various forms of expressions, mostly symbolic, among migrant communities. For centuries folk religiosity expressed and performed in popular devotions and *fiesta* rituals has created a space for indigenous expression at the core of Christian rites, indigenised by the native devotees' incorporation of folk rituals. By extension, the practice of folk religious devotions and *fiesta* rituals in the diaspora offers a venue for continuing this type of creative synthesis and evolution of folk religiosity within Catholicism. Because of the powerful attraction and affect felt towards sacred icons among Filipino diasporic communities, they continue to constitute the material props and opportunities for migrants to recreate spiritual community in the contemporary context of migrant settlement and assimilation into the host Catholic Church.

Folk devotions and the *fiesta* have been shown to have a complementary connection. Both are also connected to lowland folk cosmology and beliefs. As an example, I cite the Tagalog creation narrative, in view of its overall influence in moulding a 'Filipino culture' to provide a means of understanding the Filipino ethos, social relations and meaning-making.



According to the Tagalog creation tale, when God, called *Bathala*, in the form of a bird was flying over the islands, he heard strange sounds coming from a bamboo tree. Driven by curiosity, he pecked the bamboo tree, and when it broke into two halves, out came the first female, *Maganda* (Beautiful) and the first male, *Malakas* (Strong) (fig. 4.9). In contrast with the Judaeo-Christian genesis narrative of Adam and Eve, *Maganda* does not come from man, but comes out from the bamboo a complete human being with man. She is therefore, not just a companion of man, but a co-equal human being. They differ, however, in their qualities. In the Filipino language the word *lakas* is associated with notions of strength, might, power, vigor, energy, pull, capacity, and *ganda* is associated with beauty, goodness, graciousness, compassion, mercy, and as such have implications on lowland ethos and values. When



Catholicism imposed the Christian account of creation, folk cosmology was displaced, but not completely. *Maganda* continues to find expression in quotidian conversations, whether as a greeting *Magandang umaga, hapon, or gabi* (Good morning, afternoon, or evening) or as a common reference to what is pleasing, beautiful, “good or simply what is ethical or humane” (Astorga 2006, pp. 586-587; usages of *maganda* in the ethnography and migrant narratives in the original Filipino version are included in Appendix B). Innate goodness in Filipino is *kagandahang loob*, literally meaning, beautiful inside. In this sense, the Filipino notion of goodness is conflated with what is beautiful.

The creation myth also denotes an ideal state of cosmic order, the balance between the masculine and feminine qualities of strength and beauty. This ideal state brings about the best among humans in general and Filipinos in particular. Astorga (2006, p. 588) a Filipina theologian, offers this reflection on the *lakas-ganda* partnership:

*Lakas* without *ganda* can be arbitrary and manipulative, chaotic and destructive. But without *lakas*, *ganda* is graciousness in vain. The good needs power for it to be effectual. Without *ganda*, *lakas* can dehumanize, but without *lakas*, *ganda* cannot humanize.

The *Malakas-Maganda* creation myth is significant in the configuration of the father’s and mother’s role in the Filipino home. The importance of the

feminine is seen in its ability to mitigate the harm of unbounded power, and thus imparts goodness, beauty, light, wisdom, compassion and graciousness. Given this, it is the mother who exercises the strongest influence in the domestic space. The semantic expression referring to the father in the Filipino home is '*haligi ng tahanan*,' meaning the foundational post or column supporting the home. This is an allusion of strength exemplified by *Malakas*. The mother in turn is called '*ilaw ng tahanan*' meaning light of the home, which alludes to goodness, graciousness and compassion (*awa*) exemplified by *Maganda*. In the Filipino home the father and mother symbolise a cosmic balance between the masculine and feminine, similar to the *animus/anima* of the west, or *yin/yang* of the East. Filipino migrants as will be shown in the ethnography consider God as someone who is both powerful (*makapangyarihan*) and compassionate (*may awa ang Diyos*). Therefore, regardless of Catholicism's patriarchal reference to God as Father and Son, for Filipinos, God is a well balanced deity. Incidentally, the Church teaches that Mary is the eternal mother of humankind (see Gospel of John 19:26) affording Mary additional cultural significance. As mother of humanity, Mary assumes the mother's role in the domestic space in every Filipino home. The connection between Filipino religiosity and matrifocality is seen in Filipino popular devotions in the Philippines and overseas Filipino migrant communities. Mary's symbolic importance in the Filipino imaginary is

demonstrated by her popular iconic presence in various Philippine sacred shrines. Among overseas Filipino migrants, Mary's sacred icons draw migrant devotional affection and are the central symbols in the *fiesta* celebrations in New Zealand and Singapore.

It is important to note at this point that one of colonialism's lasting effects was a form of 'colonial mentality', that is, an internalized inferiority which includes the notion of beauty as fair or white. Okazaki, David and Abelman (2008, p. 97 citing Bergano and Bergano-Kinney 1997, and Revilla 1997) note;

[I]n various Filipino American community forums, the term 'colonial mentality' has become a common parlance for discussing observations that many Filipino Americans use skin whitening products, desire to be white, discriminate against nonwhites, have superior perceptions of whites and Western culture, and prefer anything white or Western ...

The notion of white as beautiful has been part of centuries of visual sacred representations in Philippine Catholic churches. The majority of the iconic figures in the church, for example Mary's images and statues, are European-looking, and therefore white. Since Mary is deemed the beautiful mother, Mary's whiteness is therefore a significant indication of the Filipinos' *maganda*. The high regard for the fair skinned is seen in the mestizo dominated Filipino entertainment industry in television and film.

The cosmological notion of a generous *Bathala*, the value association of beauty with virtue and goodness, and the matrifocality of Filipino families, have far reaching effects in idealised expressions of Filipino culture (there are of course differences between ideal norms and real behaviour) in social interactions and relations, and most visibly in the *fiesta* rituals. The *fiesta* ritual as celebrated in the diaspora highlights symbolically the matrifocality of the Filipino family and lowland reciprocity. Filipino migrant *fiestas* point to a continuing migrant connection to the homeland, as migrants engage with the social, cultural and economic context of hosting societies.

Ritual is foremost a symbolic performance. According to Turner (1986, p. 81) “man is a self-performing animal - his performances are, in a way, reflexive, in performing he reveals himself to himself.” Ritual therefore is “self-referential” (Rappaport 1999 p. 52). I present here three Philippine hometown *fiestas* celebrated and performed in the diaspora that are self referential narratives of history, cosmology and ethos. These discussions lead to a better understanding of the ethnography of the *fiesta* rituals performed by Filipino migrants in New Zealand and Singapore because they help in establishing the connection between homeland folk religious practices and the Filipino migrants’ construction and performance of identity overseas.

1) *Santacruzán*: The *Santacruzán* is one of the most aesthetic rituals popularly performed in most Philippine localities, and the diaspora. It is performed by various Filipino migrant communities overseas, including New Zealand. The *Santacruzán* procession ritual provides a self referencing narrative of Filipino social organisation, its aesthetic and the social value of beauty (*ganda*) and strength (*lakas*) as expressed in feminine form, with the Blessed Virgin Mary's symbolic role being the epitome of these qualities. The *Santacruzán* began in the *Tagalog* region. A translation in 1867 of a popular devotional prayer pamphlet in *Tagalog* titled, *Flores de Maria o Mariquit na Bulacnac na sa Pagninilaynilay sa Buong Buan nang Mayo ay Inihahandog nang manga Devoto cay Maria Santisima*, which means in English, "The Flowers of Mary or the Beautiful Flowers that in the Meditations During the Whole Month of May are Offered by Devotees to Mary the Holiest"<sup>137</sup> helped in propagating the devotion to different parts of the Philippines. By the twentieth century, the *Santacruzán* ritual procession had attained enough of a following to have taken root in every Catholic parish. While primarily a ritual to honour the Blessed Virgin Mary, the *Santacruzán* also incorporates the Christian myth about the pilgrimage of Queen Helena (Emperor Constantine's mother and a canonised Saint) to the Holy Land, around 326 C.E. when she was about 75 years old. Her royal entourage found three crosses. To find out which one was

---

<sup>137</sup> Information is taken from the wikipilipinas: <http://en.wikipilipinas.org/index.php?title=Santacruzán>

the authentic cross of Jesus Christ, a sick servant was asked to lie on all three. As the story goes, on touching the third cross, the servant was immediately healed, thus identifying the authentic cross of Jesus Christ.

The *Santacruzán* is observed during the whole month of May and culminates in a colourful procession. It is a devotional ritual without a national shrine, celebrated in almost all Philippine parishes. In the rural Tagalog areas, the search for the cross is re-enacted, with the family sponsoring the prayers hiding the cross and engaging in a back and forth colourful dialogue and banter, with the searchers for the cross testing both their devotion and wit.<sup>138</sup> In most parishes, rosary prayers are offered for Mary every day of the month, in family homes or chapels managed by families. It is one of the few Catholic rituals that is lay managed and performed without much clerical/priestly interference (except for the *Flores de Mayo* liturgy every Saturday). All the characters, save for Methuselah<sup>139</sup> and the Aetas (the dark upland indigenous peoples in the Philippines, also called negritos), are symbolic characterizations of the feminine, as virgins, mothers and folk religious heroines and thus highlights the idealised feminine in lowland Philippines' matrifocal cultures.<sup>140</sup> For example, biblical characters like *Reina* Judith<sup>141</sup> and

---

<sup>138</sup> I observed this cultural practice as a volunteer in Tayabas, Quezon province.

<sup>139</sup> Methuselah is supposedly the oldest man in the Bible (Genesis 5:21-27). See list in Appendix A

<sup>140</sup> Because of this the *Santacruzán* may be a good subject of feminist analysis

*Reina* Esther<sup>142</sup> are women known for their beauty and heroic strength. *Reina* Sheba<sup>143</sup> combines beauty and wisdom. Veronica, according to Christian tradition, was a woman who wiped the bloodied face of Jesus with a cloth in defiance of the Roman soldiers. Samaritana<sup>144</sup> is the woman at the well who proved to be an exemplary disciple. Mary of Magdala (or Mary Magdalene) has the title *Apostola Apostolarum* (Apostle of the Apostles) in the Church because the resurrected Jesus appeared to her first<sup>145</sup> before appearing to the apostles. Some of the procession characters are feminine symbols of virtues, like faith (*Reina Fe*), hope (*Reina Esperanza*), and charity/love (*Reina Caridad*)<sup>146</sup> and are also representations of ideal human values. The inclusion of characters symbolising marginalised groups, such as Methuselah (the elderly), the Aetas (IPs), and *Reina Mora* (Muslims) is significant, considering the prejudice against them in the 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial period and even up to the present. Combined with other characters such as, *Reina Justicia* (Queen of Justice), *Reina Sentenciada* (Queen of the sentenced and condemned prisoners), and *Reina Abogada* (the Queen of lawyers who defends the accused innocent), the ritual draws attention to issues of justice and injustice

---

<sup>141</sup> Judith is the heroine in the bible's book of Judith who beheaded the powerful general Holofernes.

<sup>142</sup> Esther is the beautiful Jewish girl in the bible's book of Esther who married the King to save the Jews.

<sup>143</sup> The Queen of Sheba is mentioned in the gospels of Matthew 12:42 and Luke 11:31

<sup>144</sup> Her story is in the Gospel of John 4:7-42

<sup>145</sup> See Gospel of John 20:11-18

<sup>146</sup> These virtues are cited in the bible's 1 Corinthians 13:13

pointing to ethical behaviour in social relations. According to Wilson (1954, p. 240):

[R]ituals reveal values at the deepest level. Surely men express in ritual what moves them most, and since the form of expression is conventionalized and obligatory, it is the values of the group which are revealed.

In this sense the *Santacruzán* procession reflects the desirable ethical values of justice, courage, and heroism, as well the religious virtues of faith, hope and charity. The ritual also hints at intransigence or “hidden transcripts” (Scott 1990, p. 191) of protest and resistance against Spanish injustices and discrimination in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Blessed Virgin Mary anchors the procession rite and is the patroness of the *Santacruzán* devotion. It is Mary who, her devotees believe, above all the other procession characters, exemplifies the most desirable values of *ganda*/beauty (as one who delights God) and *lakas*/strength (as one who stood at the foot of the cross). Mary has a significant following among Filipino migrants in New Zealand and Singapore. As shown in the ethnographic chapters, Mary embodies the challenges and pains of motherhood among migrant absentee parents, and the motherland, Philippines. Marian devotional prayers and rituals performed by Filipino diasporic communities highlight her significance to the diasporic reconstruction of the homeland in the diaspora, as part of their efforts at home-making and identity construction in foreign lands.



2) *Ati-Atihan fiesta*: The ritual of the *Ati-Atihan* is based on a folkloric account from a collection of Philippine legends in a book called *Maragtas*, meaning history, written by Monteclaro, in two local languages in Panay island (see fig. 4.1, p. 155), *Hiligaynon* and *Kinaray-á* (Regalado and Franco 1973, pp. 84-102, previously cited in p. 115; also cited by Scott 1984, pp. 93-95; Zaide 1949, p. 25)). There are two popular accounts, the pre-Christian and Christian folklore acknowledged by historians and various websites of the *Ati-atihan fiesta* in Kalibo, Aklan.<sup>147</sup> The pre-christian narrative tells of the arrival of ten boats of families led by Datu Puti<sup>148</sup> to Kalibo, a town in Aklan province. Datu Puti asked the inhabitants of the island, called *Atis* who were led by Marikudo, to allow them to use the land near the sea. In exchange, the newcomers gave Marikudo a golden *salakot*.<sup>149</sup> Thus the *Atis* agreed to life in the highlands while Datu Puti and his people lived in the lowlands. The two groups celebrated the agreement in an annual festival. However, when the *Atis* could not come, the participants painted themselves with soot and imitated the *Atis*. *Ati-atihan* means to be like *Atis*. This pre-Christian folklore tradition is said to refer to the thirteenth century migration of Malay Muslim tribes from Borneo to Panay Island of the Visayas (Zaide 1949, p. 25) and points to the beginning

---

<sup>147</sup> Ati-atihan folklore could be accessed in the following websites:

<http://www.bibingka.com/phg/ati2han/default.htm>;

[http://www.philippinecountry.com/philippine\\_festivals/ati-atihan\\_festival.html](http://www.philippinecountry.com/philippine_festivals/ati-atihan_festival.html);

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ati-Atihan\\_Festival](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ati-Atihan_Festival); [http://www.mts.net/~pmorrow/marag\\_e.htm](http://www.mts.net/~pmorrow/marag_e.htm)

<sup>148</sup> *Puti* means white, implying the prehistoric arrivals were fair skinned compared to the existing inhabitants of the island.

<sup>149</sup> The local name for a wide brimmed pagoda shaped hat used by farmers

and spread of Islam in the archipelago (Regalado and Franco 1973, p. 92). The ritual highlights the initial good will and friendship among Muslim migrants and the *Atis* in what is believed to be the first land transaction in the archipelago.

The *Ati-atihan*'s folk Christian version is a continuation of the new settlers' story. They were converted to Christianity by the Spaniards and became targets of Muslim raids. Almost overpowered by the invading Muslims in one raid, "a small boy appeared in the battle scene and drove the raiders away and then disappeared." Many attested that the boy was the *Santo Niño* and from thereon, the mud painted dancers appropriated the *Santo Niño* as the patron of the *Ati-atihan* as a commemoration of their victory over the Muslim raiders (Jocano 1981, p. 28). The narrative thus points to the second religious process that took place among the inhabitants of Kalibo which is the conversion to Christianity and the transformation of the *Ati-atihan* from an indigenous festival into a Christian *fiesta*. The ritual reflects the history of Aklanon identity's evolution from Muslim to Christian.

The *Ati-atihan*'s carnivalesque street dancing of participants dressed in colourful tribal costumes with charcoal/soot painted faces and bodies dancing to the rhythm of the drums along the streets of Kalibo (fig. 4.10, 4.11) has

often been compared to *Mardi gras* celebrations in New Orleans or the Rio Carnival for attracting tourists and revellers (Ness 1992, p. 194; Rodell 2001, p. 144). The *Ati-atihan* street dance is performed all over the Philippines and its *fiesta* is celebrated by Filipino migrant diasporas in several places around the world, which include San Francisco and Sacramento, California, Vancouver, Toronto, Maryland, Hawaii, Virginia, Saudi Arabia, Australia, and New Zealand as shown by various Filipino websites.



4.10: *Ati-atihan* procession (FestiVals 2011)



4.11: *Ati-atihan* participant (The Utrecht Faculty of Education 2011)

3) *Sinulog fiesta*: The *Sinulog* ritual, while having pre-colonial origins, does not have an accompanying pre-historic or pre-colonial folk narrative like *Ati-atihan*,<sup>150</sup> but the *Sinulog* dance is also believed to have been performed at harvest festivals to thank the *anitos* for a bountiful harvest, and as a form of

---

<sup>150</sup> Sally Ness did a significant study of the *Sinulog* in 1985. Her historical citation included an American source describing the *Sinulog* festival in the 1920s. In this sense, while from all indications the *Sinulog* is an ancient dance ante-dating the Christianization of the Philippines, existing historical records of the event are more recent.

petition prayer during healing rites (Ness1992, p. 94).<sup>151</sup> Since Cebu is the oldest parish, the *Santo-Niño-Sinulog* is the oldest *fiesta* ritual in the Philippines.

The two folk narratives of the *Sinulog fiesta* are both postcolonial accounts and both are linked to the *Santo-Niño* icon which traces its origins to the arrival of the first Spanish explorers led by Fernando Magallanes. According to the first *Sinulog* folk tale, when Cebu's Queen Hara Amihan was baptized and received the Christian name Juana she was given the image of the *Santo Niño* as a baptismal gift. It is said that after baptism she was filled with joy and danced the *Sinulog* with the *Santo Niño* in her arms.<sup>152</sup>

The second folk account tells of the miraculous cure of *Baladhay*, a favourite servant of the King, who fell very ill. The King brought him to the room where the *Santo Niño* was kept. After some time, the king's household heard a loud cry. People saw *Baladhay* well and dancing in the back and forth movement of the *Sinulog*. *Baladhay* claimed that a child tickled him and woke him up. When asked which child tickled him, he pointed to the sacred image of the

---

<sup>151</sup> *Anitos* are wooden images symbolizing the spirit of dead relatives/ancestors.

<sup>152</sup> This account is part of most *Sinulog* websites. Pigafetta's ([1523] 1874, p. 94) account mentions the gifting of the icon to Queen Hara and her pleasure in receiving it.

*Santo Niño*, but he could not explain why he was dancing. His cure was thus attributed to the *Santo Niño*.<sup>153</sup>

The two *Sinulog* folk narratives feature ritual dance performances as expressions of celebration and thanksgiving for healing. Hawaiian and Tongan dances are also associated with myth and folklore (Kaeppler 1972, 1967; Kurath 1960). The pre-colonial Hawaiian hula dance according to Kaeppler (1972, p. 38) “was an extension of poetry that honored the gods and chiefs.”<sup>154</sup> The Sissau dance of the Bella Coola Indians form part of their legends (Jacobsen and Bland 1997). Dances have played important parts in the religious rituals of the ancient world, for example, Egypt (Spencer 2003) and Mesopotamia (Collon 2003) have dances for the gods and even funerary. Ecstatic dancing among Hassidic Jews (Lapson 1963; Robertson 1988) and Sufi Muslims (Sakata 1997) expresses intoxication with the divine. Van der Veer’s (1992) ethnography of a Sufi saint’s day celebration of the Rifa’i faqirs included procession dancing. In Belgium’s Charleori, and Luxemburg’s Echternach, religious dance processions are still performed (Bourgignon 2001). During the Chosun Dynasty in Korea, Buddhism resorted to music and

---

<sup>153</sup> This folk account contains a thematic similarity to the historical accounts of Pigafetta ([1523] 1874) and Maximus of Transylvania (1523) based on Magellan’s account.

<sup>154</sup> The sacred Hawaiian Hula dance contrasts distinctly with the modern acculturated secular adaptation of Hawaiian hula done for capitalist tourism.

dance, with Monks undertaking musical and dancing training, to make it more appealing and popular (Lee 2001).

Dance performance during community feasting has also been observed among the Alaskan Eskimos (Johnston 1975) and plays an important part in fostering community relations and identity. Among African-Americans, dance performance is crucial in formulation of a black racial identity in the diaspora (Kraut 2003). In a similar manner, the *Sinulog* dance is a Cebuano-Filipino identity marker in the diaspora.



4.12: Sinulog festival: Cebu City (Filipina soul 2011)



4.13: Sinulog participant Cebu City (See You Lattè 2011)

The *Ati-atihan* and *Sinulog* dances are thus the vehicles of the narratives of Christian conversion and creolisation. The *Sinulog* ritual, like the *Ati-atihan*, is a self-referential performance. It affirms the place of Cebu as the oldest Christianised place in the Philippines and its primary role in the history of

Filipino Catholicism. Its performance affirms the distinct identity of Cebuanos among other Filipino ethnicities. The *Santo Nino-Sinulog fiesta* is celebrated by Filipino migrant communities in at least five countries.<sup>155</sup> Its celebration in Christchurch and Auckland is part of the ethnography in the present thesis, discussed in Chapter Six.

4) *Simbang Gabi* novena masses: The *Simbang Gabi* or *Misa de Gallo* mass is attached to a popular novena to the Blessed Virgin Mary performed nine days before the birth of her son Jesus on Christmas day. As the name implies, the *Misa de Gallo* masses are celebrated at the break of dawn. It is important to recall at this point that Spanish colonisation in the sixteenth century had resulted in the Hispanization of various liturgical celebrations in the colonies. Furthermore, that the Papal *Patronato Real* decree relegating Spanish colonies under the Spanish Crown to be the protector of the Catholic missions allowed missionaries to introduce liturgical practices that both assert and reinterpret church traditions in new contexts. For example, from the last Sunday of November to the Sunday before Christmas, the Roman Catholic Church observes the Advent liturgical season in preparation for the second coming of Christ and the birth of Jesus on Christmas day, and during the entire Advent

---

<sup>155</sup> Australia (Canberra and Sydney), Canada (Ontario), China (Macau), Switzerland (Geneva), the United States (New Jersey, Florida, Pennsylvania, Illinois, California, Texas) and New Zealand (Auckland, Christchurch, Wellington, Temuka, Timaru). In Los Angeles, California, the Filipino diaspora has celebrated the *Sinulog* since 1930.

season, the Church omits the *Gloria* in sung masses to emphasise the importance and gravity of Advent preparation and discipline. However, missionaries in Catholic parishes in Spanish South America and the Philippines introduced the *Simbang Gabi* or *Misa de Gallo* masses in 1660 and allowed the singing of the *Gloria* in them. This was in cognizance of the farming communities in mostly rural mission areas who prepare to farm in the early hours of the morning at the first crow of the rooster. A mass before going to the fields was meant to encourage the growth of faith among the new converts in the missions by creating a venue for Christian commitment, sacrifice and discipline through persistent attendance and participation in special dawn masses. Thus, for nine consecutive days before Christmas the Catholic faithful in former Spanish missions troop to the church for the *Misa de Gallo/Aguinaldo* masses with the *Gloria* sung joyfully at the break of dawn.

Among Filipinos, especially the ordinary *tao*, it is widely believed that those who make the *panata* or vow to complete the nine-day novena masses, and actually do so, will receive special blessings or be granted their petitions. In this sense, the *Simbang Gabi* is a folk Christian spiritual devotion. For the devotees, ritual is an occasion to create reciprocity between themselves and God. In exchange for the sacrifice of attending the church at the break of day, God does something for those who participate in the service.



The *Simbang Gabi* has been observed in most lowland parishes since it began in 1660 and has become an important tradition among devout Filipino Catholics. Lynch ([1956] 2004, pp. 211; 214) in an essay “Folk Catholicism” cites the *Simbang Gabi* as one of the three most popular Christmas *fiestas* along with New Year and the Three Kings and one of the four major family occasions, along with the town *fiesta*, *undras* (November 1-2 visit to the cemetery) and Holy Week, where the Filipino family unit or *mag-anak* is “reunited and revitalized”. The significance of traditional religious practices among families eventually translates into community social interaction and cohesion in Philippine hometowns. Filipino migrants in New Zealand and Singapore both celebrate the *Simbang Gabi*, though it has more popular following and is more widespread in Singapore as shown in Chapter Nine.

Like other rituals the *Simbang Gabi* is a self-referential narrative of the Philippines’ colonial past. It brings to mind the rural Filipinos’ conversion to Catholicism, enticed by foreigners into ritual participation which despite incomprehensible texts, posed uncanny similarities to their own. Rafael (1990, pp. 595-96) explains,

Representatives of Catholic monotheism, the friars ... acted like pagan priests (*babaylan*), encouraging the substitution of faith with the fetishistic regard for an endless array of religious images among the populace. (*Italics mine*)

The new ritual then, while displacing the previous ones, offered analogical symbolic substitutes to Filipinos' remembered past. Indeed, according to Rafael, the incomprehensibility of the foreign text allowed the natives to "fish out" meanings from the words, "arbitrarily attaching them to their imaginings" (ibid. p. 2). Christian symbols and text were given native meanings. In the *Simbang Gabi* novena, Christianity merges with the folk practice of *panata* or vow. The ritual becomes the site of reciprocal relations wherein, in exchange for proof of faithfulness -- the sacrifice of daily attendance for nine days -- favours are asked and given. When celebrated by Filipino migrant communities in New Zealand and Singapore, the ritual becomes, in addition, a narrative of home and inscription of Filipino identity in a foreign land.

### **Ritual and key symbols**

The *Santacruzán*, *Ati-atihan*, *Sinulog* and *Simbang Gabi*, in addition to being self referential rituals of colonial history, folk cosmology and social relations, are also symbolic performances. Symbols, text, and performance over space contribute to the overall configuration of the ritual's meaning. However, while significant events, relationships and symbols have ways of revealing themselves through different social situations, their repetition and cyclical regularity, making sense of these notions has always posed a challenge to ethnographers and anthropologists. According to Firth (1973, p. 404) symbols

are crucial to understanding ritual narratives because they “represent the social order and the individual's place in it”. These symbols are “multivocal, manipulable and ambiguous” (Turner 1975, p. 146). Symbols “do not tell us what to mean, but give us the capacity to make meaning” (Cohen 1985, p. 16). Since they have no fixed meanings, the same symbol can have different associations in a different context (as will be shown in chapters six and eight). Since most social interactions are embedded in symbolic exchange, such exchanges can thus be understood as “essentially the transaction of meanings” (ibid. p. 17).

Anthropologists make sense of a community's culture by examining the symbols people deploy and what meaning they impute to them. Mary and the *Santo Niño* are the most popular sacred icons among Filipino migrants in New Zealand and Singapore. Jesus, as Mary's child son (in contrast to Jesus as Son of God and Jesus the adult), is significant in understanding the overall place of Mary in the Filipino cultural sphere. As previously stated, since the mother is in-charge of the domestic space, her children are under her tutelage and influence. Similarly, Jesus, the infant/child is under the influence and tutelage of Mary. Because Mary and Jesus have emerged repeatedly among migrant communities whose memories and longings revolve around the family and home as reflected in conversations and interactions, it is reasonable to

conclude that they are the symbolic representations of the idealised memory of the absent family and home, made present in the diaspora.

The affective regard for Mary reflects the matrifocality of most Philippine lowland cultures wherein the mother, as the idealised feminine figure, reigns in the home and is respected beyond the domestic sphere. Since Catholicism displaced folk cosmology and the Filipino women's prominent role in society, including the major role in precolonial religious rituals as priestesses (see pp. 118; 121), it is plausible, on account of the Filipinos' enchantment with Mary, that Mary is the symbolic figure that has replaced colonialism's feminine void in the Filipino cultural psyche. This finds expression in folk Christianity's invocation of her role as the representation of the Christian ideal of discipleship,<sup>156</sup> motherhood and beauty. The *Santacruzán's* celebration of feminine beauty and strength, symbolised by Mary and the procession characters, and its popularity among Filipinos, stems from its ideational and contextual relevance to lowland folk cosmology.

The Filipinos' affective devotion to Mary is somewhat similar to the Mexican adulation of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Wolf (1958, p. 34) explains,

---

<sup>156</sup> According to Catholic tradition, Mary as the mother of Jesus who is his first believer is also the first disciple.

The Guadalupe symbol links together family, politics and religion; colonial past and independent present; Indian and Mexican. It reflects the salient social relationships of Mexican life, and embodies the emotions which they generate ... It is ultimately, a way of talking about Mexico: a 'collective representation' of Mexican society.

The vacuum left by Tonantzin, the mother goddess in pre-colonial Mexican cultures (Bushnell 1958; Wolf 1958) appeared to call for a feminine substitute which the Virgin of Guadalupe provided. The Virgin was also a unifying symbol during two key moments in Mexican history: the Mexican War of Independence against Spain and Emiliano Zapata's agrarian reform rebellion in 1910 (Wolf 1958).

By contrast, there has been no 'Tonantzin or Mother Goddess' cult among Filipinos, but following Wolf's logic, the Blessed Virgin Mary is a master symbol for Filipinos because she was an important symbol in two key moments in Philippine history: she was the symbol of inspiration and hope for Filipino sailors, severely outnumbered with only two ships, against the Dutch fleet of eighteen ships, in the five battles of Manila Bay in 1646, and was credited with the 'miraculous' victory, thus preserving Catholicism in the islands. Mary was also the unifying symbol in the 1986 bloodless EDSA 1 revolution. On 22 February 1986, Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin called on the Filipino people to come out into the streets to support a faction of the military which had withdrawn support from the ruling Marcos dictatorial regime,

precipitating the EDSA People's Power Revolution. The Church provided an iconic symbol, the Blessed Virgin Mary, to encourage people to pray in the face of danger and turmoil. In Astorga's (2006, p. 572) account:

The crowd swelled to an estimated two million ... singing songs, praying the rosary, waving yellow flags and carrying religious statues... People knelt in prayer, threw their bodies in the path of the tanks, offered flowers to the soldiers, and appealed for peace and solidarity. As the crowd continued to grow in size and spirit, government troops defected in droves to the side of the people.

The People Power Revolution's victory was credited to the Filipino faith and the Blessed Virgin Mary's protection.

Another ritual characteristic of particular importance in terms of the Filipino *fiesta* rituals is its contextual relevance. Rappaport (1999, p. 47) suggests performers performing a ritual "are not simply 'saying something' about themselves but are also 'doing something' about the state of their world" in a specific social historical context. Rituals "more than mirror existing social arrangements and existing modes of thought" because they "act to recognize them or even help to create them" (Moore and Myerhoff 1977, p. 5). We see in the *Santacruz* a moral challenge to Filipinos in mid-18<sup>th</sup> century colonial Philippines, to emulate heroic courage; to have faith, hope and charity; to practice justice; to respect the 'other' -- the Muslims, IPs, and elderly. Ritual, in addressing each changing context therefore is processual. It is in constant process of constructing meanings from the various symbols of its performance.

Because it facilitates a symbolic exchange of meanings, it has the capacity to bring about transformation and change. Thus ritual is also transformative. For Van Gennep ([1960] 1972, pp. 2-3) life is a series of passages, and rituals “enable the individual to pass from one defined position to another.” Ndembu rituals like *Isoma* (Turner 1969) and *Wubinda* or “rituals of affliction” (Turner 1962) transform a person from a state of affliction, barrenness or sickness, to wellness. The *mothei* puberty ritual of Tswapong girls effects a series of transformations, “from weakness to potency; dependence to independence; darkness to shaded protection; the wild, threatening but powerful bush to safe human habitation” (Werbner 2009, p. 442). Rituals highlight desired transformative effects in the condition of participants or community performing them.

Some rituals are cultural markers of time or seasons and define the kind of community activity required, like planting or harvesting. I have stated before that the *fiesta* provides a continued sense of seasonal regularity and ‘normality’ to every Philippine town and village. As a lowland Filipina, the *fiesta* is something I grew up with and was a time marker between activity and rest. I like *fiestas*. My sleepy, small hometown of Daet came alive and was transformed from a state of languidness and passivity towards action and excitement. The town *fiesta* brought a flurry of activities where the rich and

the poor, educated and not so educated, powerful and the powerless, and religious and not so religious could all find something to be happy about. For the rich and powerful it is time to flaunt wealth and influence on an occasion where they are seen and recognized. For the poor, the powerless and the uneducated it is the time to enjoy the town's hospitality where homes, usually closed to strangers, are open for one day each year, to free meal seekers, even if they are strangers. Colourful presentations and performances are also offered for free, sponsored by the generous rich, and help one forget, if only for a day, a few of life's worries. For the religious, it is a time of thanksgiving and prayer for the benefits and gains of the year, seen as sacred blessings. For the not-so-religious and even the irreligious, it is a 'legitimate play time', meaning, some excesses like late night partying, drinking, and even gambling are tolerantly considered 'part' of the *fiesta* deal. The *fiesta* thus sets the community into a frenzy of preparation, participation and performance. Social relations are affirmed, deepened, renewed or made. The *fiesta* is not only part of family and social life, but it enlivens family and community life. For Filipinos living in different lowland localities, if culture is life, *fiesta* is culture; if heritage is a living cultural legacy, *fiesta* is heritage.



### Summary and conclusion

Filipino folk religiosity is a creolised Christianity. It reflects centuries of interaction between the indigenous and Christian cosmologies and more specifically Spanish Catholicism. Social relations according to Filipino folk cosmology, include relations with the supernatural and unseen beings. A positive relationship with God and the spirits bode well for one's *kapalaran* or destiny and *swerte* or good luck. In time of risk, one may trust in divine providence, by invoking "*bahala na*".

Filipino folk religiosity is intimately connected to devotions to sacred icons, as metonymic representations of the sacred. Devotional piety is a form of folk religiosity based on the same cosmology that posits that reciprocal relations exists between human mortals and sacred beings, in particular the holy patrons or saints from whom favours are implored. The devotional novenas are performed to seek favours (or *swerte*) connected to one's important quotidian needs. In this sense, the sacred is engaged in the affairs of the world.

The *fiesta* is not a single ritual performance but a series of community events all of which encompass multiple performances on two levels, religious and social. As a holy patron's feast day, each *fiesta* is a celebration akin to a relative's birthday. It is a site of kinship and affinal relations, social

interaction, material flows, and cultural expressions. Families and friends gather, participate in the religious ritual and carnival, and enjoy food commensality. But while a *fiesta* fosters family and community solidarity and unity among humans, it also strengthens ties between humans and sacred beings.

Popular folk devotions and *fiesta* rituals like the *Sinulog*, *Ati-atihan*, and *Santacruzán*<sup>157</sup> continue to be located in an in-between space, apart from, and yet connected to, official Catholic theology and practice. The spread of *fiesta* celebrations like the *Sinulog* and *Ati-atihan*, and the devotional practices honouring holy patrons among Filipino diasporic communities extends the creative evolvment of folk Christianity to foreign shores, like New Zealand and Singapore. The re-enactment and performance of historically influenced and evolved homeland rituals enable migrants to create and claim a space for pilgrimage, refuge, and spiritual renewal within their homes and communities in the diaspora. From a geographical site “back home,” the sacred object has found repose among migrant homes in the diaspora.

---

<sup>157</sup> The *Simbang Gabi* as a liturgy is encouraged by the Church. However, the attachment of *panata* to the ritual for special petitions is an expression of folk religiosity.

In general, Filipino migrant performance of Catholic *fiestas* and their accompanying folkloric re-telling both are subliminal inversions of migrant voicelessness within the hierarchical structure of the Filipino Catholic church, as well as a continuing interactive and creative process of synthesis between folk sacred practices and Catholicism, then and now.

The succeeding five chapters, Chapter Five, Six, Seven, Eight and Nine, illustrate the embeddedness of Filipino folk religiosity in the migration process, and in migrant contextual adaptation, resistance and resilience in their overseas destinations. The chapters give an account of the *fiesta* performance of Filipino communities in New Zealand and Singapore and argue that the migrants' *fiesta* celebrations both embody and invoke homeland memory while they embrace the sacred as a community identity marker of being Filipinos in a foreign land.

## Chapter Five

### Filipinos in New Zealand

#### Introduction

*Whatever sense we have of how things stand with someone else's inner life, we gain it through their expressions, not through some magical intrusion into their consciousness. It's all a matter of scratching surfaces.*

Geertz (1986, p. 373)

I have pointed out at the beginning that existing theoretical discourses identify three common diaspora characteristics: a) dispersion; b) homeland orientation; and c) an identity distinct from that of host societies. I have shown (in Chapter Two) the socio-economic context (local and international) that has shaped the accelerating rate of Filipino transnational migration in the past decades that has created a Filipino labour diaspora dispersed across almost 200 countries in the world (see p. 44). In my exploration of the role of religion in Filipino transnational migration and diaspora, it has become obvious that migrant practices, while indeterminate, have been influenced and shaped by the dialogical interaction between the homeland memory and homemaking overseas. Each diaspora is defined by their distinctive historical experiences that helps influence and shape its particular identity and socio-cultural orientation. Thus, for better understanding of Filipino migrant practices, I presented (in Chapter Three) the pre-colonial and colonial historical context (Spanish and American) that has transformed and shaped Filipino social

institutions (family, religion, education and political organisation), identity (national and regional), economic system (from communal to feudal) and social stratification (class hierarchy and domestic servility). To better understand folk Christianity, I presented (in Chapter Four) Filipino lowland cosmology and notion of reciprocity permeating human and supernatural relations through syncretised folk Christian practices and rituals. In the following five ethnographic chapters, the discussion shifts from the homeland to the migrant country of destination, by looking at the Filipino migrants' processes of immersion, adaptation and home-making, in the two different contexts of New Zealand and Singapore.

The chapter is the first of two ethnographic accounts of Filipinos in New Zealand and describes the growth and development of Filipino community formations: how from the purely social Filipino meal gatherings of New Zealand brides, it developed into a more organised community, albeit with some fractiousness. The discussion includes the contestations and different levels of 'othering' experienced by some migrants in the diaspora.

Besides that, this chapter explores the role of religion in transnational migration by looking at Filipino folk Christian dispositions that have been historically shaped connect with the migrant agency in the migration and

settlement process. I look at the Filipinos' perception of a Filipino identity, which visibly include religiosity and how such disposition is applied to their quotidian positionings in various circles in the diaspora. I draw attention to some migrant narratives of their transnational journey and devotional practices towards the sacred. I examine the manifestation of their attachment and affective regard for sacred icons in terms of ritualisation and iconic display.

Place as a geographical and metaphorical site is crucial in the discursive definition of a diaspora simply because diaspora involves population (and cultural) transnational dispersal and settlement. As previously mentioned, the connection between culture and place has long been accepted, even if according to some critiques, not adequately problematised. As the ethnographic account follows the Filipino migrants' transnational journey from the homeland to New Zealand, it also pays attention to the anthropological notions of space and place. The role of space and place in the construction of community is crucial in a diaspora's efforts at home-making. Gupta and Ferguson (1997, p. 6) suggest a "focus on social and political processes of place making" in terms of "embodied practices that shape identities." This is significant in this chapter as it frames the analysis of migrant construction of community and identity-making within the anthropological discourse of home-making and place-making. The

ethnography shows that Filipino migrant community activities are ways of home and place-making.

Culture, history, myths, language and religion are instrumental in forging the migrant diaspora ethnic identity overseas (Djuric 2003). This implies relationality founded on boundary setting in terms of similarity and difference (Cohen 1985 p. 12). Migrant performance of homeland cultural practices overseas is an endemic part of the process of diasporic community and identity construction. Diasporic remembrance and preservation of homeland memories go through the process of reinterpretation, innovation and reconstruction in a new context. Thus, a diaspora preserves elements of the homeland's cultural collective identity through "language, or religious, social, and cultural practice" but is also able to adapt "in mixed, bicultural forms" (Tölölyan 2007 p. 649), as will be shown in the hybridising efforts of the budding diasporic community of Filipina brides in Christchurch.

### **Diasporic beginnings in New Zealand: appropriating the NZ "barbies"**

I only had one dream, to marry the man I love and to have beautiful children.

Pauline

While there had been Filipinos in New Zealand since 1936, as previously stated, their presence had been, on the whole, demographically insignificant

before the 1970s. The Filipino diaspora's narrative begins with the community of Filipina New Zealand brides.

At one of the Filipino barbecues in early 2007, Richard, a New Zealander married to Salve, a Filipina, upon hearing about my research on the Filipinos, loaned me his copy of a featured television documentary titled "Philippine Affair" about Filipina New Zealand brides in the late 1980s which sought to answer the prevailing questions among the public over the growing number of Filipina brides in New Zealand. Mike, another New Zealand husband, noted the highly polarised views posted in newspapers and magazines in New Zealand public and media discourses of the increasing number of non-European brides. The process of defining migrant identity and difference is important (Brah 1996) and discursively created (Tyner 2004). 'Identity markers' emerge from conversations allowing for a cumulatively compiled body of knowledge of the migrant "other". The stereo-typed image of the Filipina New Zealand bride or "mail-order-bride" -- of impoverished Filipinas seeking white New Zealand husbands for a better life -- was a significant identity marker constructed by the host community wary of the '*femme* Asian other' snatching local male attention.<sup>158</sup> The media blitz of the Filipina mail-

---

<sup>158</sup> There was no public scrutiny of European brides, even if some marriages between New Zealand men with European women also happened through the mail, a theme artistically presented in the famous New Zealand film "The Piano".



order-brides in the 1980s reinforced the oriental female stereo-type of subservient Asian women willing to marry “out of economic desperation” (Constable 2003, p. 64; Robinson 1996, p. 54). When a gendered stereo-type like “mail-order-bride” is subsumed as a Filipino racial and ethnic identity marker, it transforms the negative “lowly and needy-scheming-bride” representation into an encompassing stigmatized identity of the whole nation/race. Notably, the public discourse about mail-order-brides falls within the years of parliamentary deliberations on the revision of migration policies leading to the NZ Immigration Reform Act of 1987, and as will be shown later, has lasting effects on diasporic relations.

The documentary opens with footage of personal newspaper ads of Filipinas seeking overseas male pen friends and a crowd of women taking a walk in Manila Bay. A narrator’s voice-over provides the opening lines of the feature story:

The Philippines, home of the mail-order-bride. Every year thousands forsake this home to marry foreigners they hardly know. An emerging destination is New Zealand. Why are growing numbers of New Zealand men looking to the Philippines for partners? Why do these women risk their lives with a stranger?

The narrator followed a group of Filipinas married to New Zealanders. It also features Filipina brides who had abusive husbands, and got divorced. The New

Zealand context of domestic violence/abuse and divorce rates was not provided, so there was no reference for comparison with mixed marriages. The interviews with the managers of introduction agencies were interesting, but lacked a clear explanation of their matching operations between prospective husband clients and brides. While the main theme was mail-order-brides, no actual brides whose marriage was facilitated by the agencies were featured. Thus while the documentary could be lauded for drawing attention to the phenomenon of the Filipina mail-order-bride, it fell short in terms of actual evidence. The strongest point of the documentary for me was its depiction of a weekly gathering of a small community of Filipina brides in Christchurch as “barbeque Filipino style,”<sup>159</sup> because it provided an insight into how the Filipino diaspora formation began.

The barbeque, or “barbie” as New Zealanders call it, is a national favourite. When Prince William came for an official visit to New Zealand in January 2010, Prime Minister John Key hosted a barbie in place of a formal dinner. The New Zealand husbands introduced their wives to the barbie and this provided an opportunity for mixed couples to meet and talk. Soon the occasional barbie became a regular weekly gathering mostly tolerated by New Zealand husbands keen to make their wives’ settlement in New Zealand as

---

<sup>159</sup> The food brought to the table by the brides as shown in the footage were Filipino dishes.

easy as possible. Margie recalled that they celebrated the major *fiestas* or feasts, Christmas and Easter, with Filipino-styled NZ barbies.<sup>160</sup> It is important to note that food is part of all Filipino family and social occasions, in the same way perhaps as it is with many other cultures. Each of the brides prepared a Filipino dish for the buffet table at the barbie, which soon resembled the family *fiesta* food or *handa* in Filipino, as their number grew. As one of the primary identifications of the *fiesta*, each family prepares food or *handa* for their invited guests as well as random strangers who come. Everyone is welcome in the *fiesta*. In some places in the south (like Bohol and Mindanao), the guests are also given “take home” food for family members unable to come. Fernandez and Castillo (2002, pp. 87-88) explains the *handa*:

The *fiesta* table speaks for and of ordinary folk and their gratitude ... the meal is celebration, and the best they can afford... always, the table must be filled ... edge to edge .... Why? To express joy, to reciprocate the year's bounty, to thank neighbours who helped plough fields, and friends who sponsored baptisms and weddings, as well as the parish priest and the mayor, ancestral spirits, the patron saint and God.

The *handa* also reflects folk religiosity's social relations among humans and sacred beings. Since the *fiesta* is the feast day of a patron saint, it is a celebration of human-sacred reciprocal relations. In exchange for the holy patron's blessings and protection, devotees perform the *fiesta's* religious

---

<sup>160</sup> The food served, including the barbecued meat, was prepared and cooked the Filipino way by the brides. Meats for barbecue are marinated overnight with a mixture of soy sauce, vinegar and various spices such as onion, garlic, black pepper and bay leaves.

rituals (mass, processions, novenas) and celebrate with feasting (see pp. 182-183, 211, 213). In-between barbies, the brides celebrated each other's birthdays. When their babies came, they celebrated baptisms and birthdays with barbies and never ran out of reasons to gather. These regular Filipino-style barbie gatherings helped ease their feelings of homesickness and separation from family and friends in the Philippines. Moore and Myerhoff (1977, p. 7) note that aside from memorialising the past, "collective ceremony may traditionalize new material." The Filipino brides appropriated a new activity, the barbie, and made it their own. By infusing it with a Filipino *fiesta* ambience, they thus started a new hybrid tradition that continues to be popular among Filipino migrant circles in New Zealand.

The brides' recreation of the homeland *fiesta* ambience may be taken as part of the process of home-building (Hage 1997) wherein the "affective qualities of home " are recreated and performed from their memory of the past, in the present (Ahmed, Castañeda, Fortier and Sheller 2003, p. 9, citing Hoffman). The centrality of the Filipino *handá* or food reveals the ideological power of food in eliciting a "feeling of community ... crucial for feeling at home" (Hage 1997, p. 103). The brides took turns in hosting the barbies, which meant that their homes on such occasions, became the spatial venues of home-making in a foreign land. Putnam (1999, p. 144) states:

Dwelling is at the core of how people situate themselves in the world. The boundary of home is still the most culturally significant spatial demarcation, and ... homemaking ... provides [the] key terms for ordering one's past, present, and future. One's sense of home is bound up in a sequence of relationship usually termed "familial": parents, brothers and sisters, partner and children, but includes also a penumbra of significant others: friends, neighbours, and associates. (Brackets mine)

Connerton (1989, p. 93, 104) notes that habits are "affective dispositions" in "conveying or sustaining memory." They incarnate the traditional so that in repeating the past, it gives meaning to the present (ibid. p. 63). Feeling at home also connotes a feeling of belonging (Jones and Kryzanowski 2008).

Marshall (2002, p. 360) explains:

'Belonging' ... is alliterative shorthand for ... attraction, identification, and cohesion. Just as belief is a step beyond knowledge, belonging is a step beyond membership. Group memberships arise via some combination of chance and choice, but ... a status that one may not be committed to or desirous of. Human social interdependence necessitates that at least some of these memberships become solidified into something potent and secure -- in short, belonging.

While devoid of ceremonial trappings, the appropriation of the weekly Kiwi barbies by a small community of Filipina brides married to New Zealand men as their own space for interaction, and reconstructing in them a semblance of the Filipino *fiesta*, may be interpreted as an attempt to fill a vacuum due to displacement in a foreign land. Moore and Myerhoff (1977, p. 17) view "collective ceremony ... as a cultural statement about cultural order as against a cultural void." The brides' reconstruction of a *fiesta* ambience is an important

reminder of the “home” and family they left behind. At the same time, it also became an occasion where a network of friends created a quasi family for needed support, allowing the budding diaspora to practice ‘Filipino hospitality’ and reciprocity. In the barbie space, the language, food, and even the jokes were “Filipino” (some informants claimed that only Filipinos could ‘get their jokes’). The feminine diaspora conversations had various themes: sentiments of missing home, the latest celebrity news in the Philippines from information gleaned from showbiz magazines sent by relatives and friends, employment problems, concerns of other family members and friends in the Philippines or those settled in other parts of the world, or spousal problems caused by high telephone bills.<sup>161</sup> The conversations thus extended beyond the boundaries of their localities (Christchurch and Auckland). The barbies became a safe space for “difference”, for “brown” Filipinas with a distinct language, food and humour and allowed for the emergence of a Filipino identity in a new and slowly evolving multicultural space in New Zealand before the immigration reform of 1987. Hage (1997, p. 102) in his ethnography of Lebanese migrants in Sydney, explains the process of home-making:

[T]he home as an... edifice ... to be successfully erected... has to be built with affective blocks that provide either in themselves or in combination with others four key feelings: security, familiarity,

---

<sup>161</sup> A bride informant recalled the quarrels about high phone bills because of overseas calls to the Philippines, but she reminded him (NZ husband) about her work and contribution to family expenses.

community and a sense of possibility... A deeper sense of security and homeliness emanates from the space where we not only have but where *we feel empowered to seek* the satisfaction of our needs and to remove or exclude threatening otherness... space where one possesses a maximal spatial knowledge... a space where one possesses maximal communicative power...[and] a space open for possibilities...

The brides' barbie gatherings may be seen in this sense as attempts at place-making and home-making in New Zealand.

Migrant practices of bonding and meeting with co-ethno-nationals, using the homeland language, along with their desire for material objects from home, such as food, are attempts at regrounding (Ahmed, Castañeda, Fortier and Sheller 2003) which is similar to Werbner's (1990) reference to migrant 'renaturalisation' of homeland cultural practices. According to Connerton (1989, p. 37):

Groups provide individuals with frameworks within which their memories are localised and memories are localised by a kind of mapping. We situate what we recollect within the mental spaces provided by the group.

Ordinarily, diaspora settlement entails migrant reconfiguration of "space to make home" in the public and private spheres they inhabit (Collins 2009, p. 840). The brides' homes were the locus of diasporic encounters. Thus the Filipino migrants' spatial clustering was initially mobile, moving from home to home, allowing each one to play the role of host and guest.

### **Cultural encounters: living with difference**

According to Margie, the barbies were also occasions when they talked about “serious matters” such as cultural misunderstanding and conflicts. The newly married mixed couples had to deal with fundamental differences of perception in terms of gender roles, family commitments, social reciprocity and food sharing. The brides recalled their husbands’ difficulty in relating to the excessive amount of food (*handa*) on the table. Julie remembers a party she and her husband hosted for the group,

For example we have a party here, after we finish eating and there are some leftovers, I’ll say, “you can take some, so it’s not wasted. For the whites (Kiwis) who are there, that is rude. Its rude for them that you have already eaten and you will still take home food (laughs). They got used to it. Filipino custom is really to have take home. (laughs)<sup>162</sup>

Jackie recalls the horror of her husband the first time they were given a “take home” by their host, “We have already eaten, why is it that you have to take this food?” She found his incomprehension funny, “They wonder... that’s why I said it is part of the *fiesta*.”

Most Filipina wives were timid and obedient, and culturally intimidated by white husbands who they saw as their “superiors,” undoubtedly a legacy of colonialism. While culturally, Asia is prevalently patriarchal and that man is the head of the family, Philippine lowland cultures are mostly matrifocal (see

---

<sup>162</sup> Original text in Appendix B: Chapter 5.1.



pp. 189, 191, 193, 207). Spanish colonialism reduced the female role in the community and religious spheres. Both Spanish and American colonialisms' projected racial and cultural superiority which have produced a 'colonial mentality' of racial and cultural inferiority (see p. 190). The results of a psychological study of Filipino colonial mentality done on Filipino Americans indicated that in the subconscious level "Filipino-related stimuli have been associated with ideas of inferiority, unpleasantness, and undesirability whereas American-related stimuli have been associated with ideas of superiority, pleasantness, and desirability" (Okazaki, David and Abelman 2008, p. 97). It is plausible to assume that colonial mentality comes into play with mixed White-Filipino marriage relationships, and is implicit in Pauline's ideal of 'beautiful children' (see quote p. 222) as realisable through marriage to a white man.

The Filipina brides' commitments to help and support members of the family (nuclear and extended) have been a sore point among some mixed couples. Some Kiwi husbands could not understand why their Filipina wives had to send money to their families back home. To their credit, some brides, including Pauline, eventually found their voices. Pauline describes her arguments with her husband:

He (husband) is kind, really kind. However, when it comes to sending money ... Even when I'm also working, he interferes. I think in the end, he got tired of asking because I answer back, 'Hey, I'm working. It's not your money.' He gets upset. He asks why I say it's not his money, when our income should be joint. 'No, you're trying to make me account for the money, so I want to make it clear that it's not your money I'm sending, and, it's not your money I'm spending to buy things for my family... It's not your money... period.' (Original in English)<sup>163</sup>

Sandra, another bride, recalled being shocked at finding out that her husband had asked their son to pay for his lodging upon being employed part time, "He is our son. Why do we have to ask him to pay for staying in his own home?"<sup>164</sup>

Margie who offers her home as temporary shelter for newly arrived Filipino migrants who are still job hunting cites some cases when some of the Filipinas asked her to safeguard their savings so that their husbands would not know and thus avoid open conflicts. She also notes the difference between the two cultures in terms of hospitality:

[The] Kiwi... When it comes to money, they can never feed people... It's very hard for them to give. Even for [my husband], it's very hard for me to accommodate these people before when he was staying here because he can't believe that I was feeding these people. It means money. And I said to [him]... don't worry.... don't worry... I don't want you to pay any single cent for the mortgage, for the rates, for the insurance, for the car, for everything, even [a] single cent... I'll do it... so he's happy. (Original in English, brackets mine.)

---

<sup>163</sup> Pauline schooled in a well-known exclusive school for girls with a reputation for good "Catholic education and discipline" and upper class students.

<sup>164</sup> Filipinos are allowed to stay with their parents for free for as long as they want (even after marriage).

Margie has tried to balance her own marriage with her own need for friends, explaining, “I can live without a husband, but I can never live without friends.” The migrant’s need for friends provides the “affective building blocks” of home-making “where they are” (Hage 1997, p. 104). In this sense nostalgia for homely belonging spurs the development of diasporic circles and networks and contributes to its growth. These closely bonded groups have been observed among varied diasporas such as the Pakistanis in Manchester (Werbner 1990), the Italians of New York (Orsi 1985) and the Cubans of Miami (Tweed 1997).

Despite being popularly portrayed and perceived as victims, most Filipina brides do not see themselves as such (Tibe-Bonifacio 2005). Sharon, an informant recalled that when the brides in Christchurch with their husbands eventually formed a formal and registered organisation in Christchurch,<sup>165</sup> a New Zealand husband wanted to become the first president of the organization, but the Filipina brides refused and insisted that the leader should always be a Filipino “native.” The brides’ insistence on a Filipino leader reveals an awareness of a distinct ‘Filipino’ identity apart from their Kiwi husbands. Tölölyan (2007, p. 650) notes that diasporas manifest themselves in

---

<sup>165</sup> It was called the Philippine Society of Canterbury Incorporated, a non-profit organisation with the primary goal of promoting the welfare and well-being of Filipinos residing in New Zealand, the first organised Filipino group in the South Island.

relations of difference, connected but distinct from both the host society and homeland. In this sense diasporic communities are defined by both its relational connections and distinctness. The boundaries of distinction between Filipinos and non-Filipinos, in this instance proved resilient even to one of the most intimate form of social relations such as marriage.

In terms of religion, a Baptist Christian bride, Carolyn, recalls, “First thing that I did, I asked my husband, ‘I’m going to attend a Baptist church. You have to find me one.’ So he looked for one and we attended (the Sunday prayer service) there (the Baptist church).” Another bride, Margie, convinced her would be husband to convert to her religion:

I told him that I’m very devoted with my religion. And I told him that in my religion, I have so many do’s and don’ts. So he asked me what religion I belong. And I told him Seventh Day Adventists. He never heard ... knew anything about Seventh Day Adventists. So he started looking for a Seventh Day Adventist Church.... And he found a Seventh Day Adventist church and he talked to the Pastor. And the Pastor explained the Seventh Day Adventists. And he had a bible study and he was baptized before he went there (Philippines). And for me that’s my security because I never had any family or friends. But if my husband... if we had the same religion, we can pray together. We can go to church together and you know, we can do everything together... easier... And it’s easier for me. So that’s my security for me. And then ... when he became a Seventh Day Adventist and got baptized, then ... he went to the Philippines and then ... we got married. (Original in English, parentheses mine.)

With regards to Pauline, who was a 21-year-old young bride, despite an Anglican husband, she had a Catholic wedding:

It was a Catholic wedding. Because he (husband) worked at the Christchurch hospital and the Chaplain was the late Fr.... and he told him, 'I have to get married at church because ... my wife's family wants us to get married at church ...' The priest said, "I can marry you" so that's it, we got married (in the Catholic rites). (Original in English, parentheses mine.)

Pam, elicited a promise from Michael, her Kiwi husband, to take her to church every Sunday, a promise he had kept for seventeen years, despite being agnostic. Even with non-Catholic husbands, the Catholic brides found a space for sacred icons in their new homes. In general, the Filipina brides, Catholics and non-Catholics alike, were able to find a space for the practice of their religion. Not only were the Filipina brides in Christchurch able to assert their identity as a group, but they were also able to express their religious beliefs and values.

### **Diaspora growth**

The 1987 Immigration Reform Act opened New Zealand to skilled migration regardless of race. Thus, skilled non-European immigrants, mostly Asians, became residents. The skilled migrant visas allowed the principal applicants to take their families with them. The influx of Filipino families increased the Filipino diaspora population in most cities and towns with a gradual

demographic shift in the gender composition. As previously stated, before 1987, the Filipino diaspora was mostly composed of brides. After 1987, Filipino males, mostly skilled technicians, such as engineers, IT and computer programmers started settling with their families. There is continuing gender imbalance with 34 per cent males and 66 per cent females out of the one thousand and five (1005) Filipino population in Christchurch (The Migrants Report 2007). This is mostly due to the feminine slant in some professions, such as nursing, care giving and accountancy. At one of the Filipino parties in 2007, James, a New Zealand husband noted (regretfully) that the Kiwis no longer comprised the fifty per cent of “Filipino barbies” and parties. Diaspora gatherings are now mostly attended by Filipino families, with fewer, but still enthusiastic New Zealand husbands.

Similar to the barbies of the Filipina brides, small groups of skilled migrants in Christchurch and Auckland come together regularly for a Filipino meal, *fiesta* style (every person brings a Filipino dish) every week. Some consider these weekly gatherings as important to their well-being. Annie sees Filipino friends as an anchor in the instability of diasporan life:

That [Filipino community] is your family here, the church, the choir. They are like your family here. Whatever the group you

have joined, in my opinion, they are your second family. Because when you came here, you had no family.<sup>166</sup> (brackets mine)

Home is a “site of relatedness” where family, kinship and social relations are implicated (Ahmed, Castañeda. Fortier and Sheller 2003, p. 12). Home also provides security, community, familiarity and possibility (Hage 1997). For Filipinos, family and home are connected and have interchangeable meaning, since “home is tied to ideas of family back in the Philippines, even as that family is reconfigured by their own absence and their remittances” (Constable 1999, p. 209).

The arrival of Filipino skilled migrants expanded the number of existing community formations. It moved from an informal social circle to formal social organisations. From a simple social group with fluid objectives, other groups emerged with more specific objectives, such as the cultural performance groups and sports groups. The forms of gathering also changed. While barbies in migrant homes continued, community gatherings became too big to be accommodated in houses. The *fiesta* barbies moved from private homes to public spaces, and became the distinctive theme for large Filipino gatherings in community halls and clubs. The *fiesta* as table fellowship evolved into a Filipino cultural performance staged seasonally in New Zealand

---

<sup>166</sup> Original text in Appendix B: Chapter 5.2; Annie came with her husband and children so her reference to family means the extended family.

multicultural events in the public spaces of the North and South Islands. An organisation called *Charisma Filipina* with the primary objective of presenting the “genuine native culture” of the Philippines to the New Zealand audience was formed by folk dance enthusiasts with a mixture of brides and Colombo plan NZAID scholars (see pp. 85-86). While the organisation slowly faded due to inactive members, the performative expression of Filipino culture continued.

5.1: Independence Day 2008 Philippine Culture and Sports



From 2007-2010 an organisation called Philippine Culture and Sports (PCS) was the most active organiser of Philippine Independence day cultural shows (fig. 5.1). It has also shown the broadest appeal to other migrant groups in the 2009 multi-cultural programme. The 2010 Independence Day celebration was graced by Christchurch Mayor Bob Parker and wife Jo.



Through all the transitions, the Filipino networks continued to expand, strengthened by regular activities and interactions. However, as organisation members increased, so did differences among members, leading to the birth of other Filipino organisations. Informants note the proliferation of Filipino organisations all claiming to unify the *Pinoys*. One informant jokingly<sup>167</sup> told me that when a person loses the election for leadership of the organisation, protests will soon be lodged, and a new group will soon be organised by the one who lost.<sup>168</sup> Competition for the much coveted leadership role appears to be the ‘triggering’ factor. Okamura (1983, p. 350 citing Carriaga [1974]), in his study of Filipinos in Hawaii notes that the “absence” of homeland hierarchy allows migrants greater freedom to contest leadership. In Christchurch where most Filipinos are skilled and educated, leadership contestations are mostly aimed at representation in multicultural fora in the city, but also at access to available funding for community activities. Organisational conflicts, according to informants, were often triggered by financial matters and some warranted attention in local New Zealand newspapers. A few cases were lodged in NZ courts, one resulting in the freezing of the organisation’s bank account. In another case, harrassment and verbal threats necessitated Police intervention. This is not unique among

---

<sup>167</sup> Filipinos often joke to dispel the seriousness of the matter and to provide a cushion for difficult truths.

<sup>168</sup> Rockell (2009, p. 132) acknowledges the occurrence of splinter groups from existing Filipino organisations.

Filipinos in NZ. Scharrenberg (1929, p. 51) notes the “fighting” among overseas Filipinos in the U.S. in the 1920s.

There are at least twelve formal Filipino organisations in Christchurch: 1) Philippine Society of Canterbury Inc.; 2) Philippine Culture and Sports; 3) Couples for Christ Music Ministry; 4) Philippine Sports at *Iba pa*; 5.) Sinulog *Fiesta*; 6.) Filsoc (University of Canterbury); 7) Philippine Flamingo All Rounders; 8) the Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) Filipino community and choir; 9) Iglesia ni Cristo (INC), 10) Filipino Chaplaincy choir; 11) Filipino Trust; 12) Couples for Christ (CFC). The CFC has active chapters in Auckland and Christchurch with a regular weekend barbies, prayer sessions, and on-going ‘formation’ seminars. The group is credited with organising the first Filipino choir in Christchurch. Members insist that the CFC is multicultural and ecumenical, and a few non-Filipinos and non-Catholics have in fact joined the group. Apart from these organisations, there are numerous small informal circles/groups based on language, *alma mater*, or leisure preferences such as sports (mostly basketball and volleyball).

Among Filipinos in Christchurch, the choir takes the role of the pseudo-kin group. A familiar comment one hears upon introduction is, “Ah, you are with

the choir of so and so...”<sup>169</sup> Filipino choir groups in Christchurch are significant indicators of intra-community affiliations. One’s participation in a choir and association with its leaders is also interpreted as being an ally of these persons. In the Philippines one’s identity is based on one’s family, province and region. These also indicate one’s social alliances in the diaspora, an important point that is presented in the next chapter. Despite distinct loyalties of members, the choirs are also able to cooperate with each other. Two choirs share the same guitar players and musicians. Marina, a Baptist Christian pianist has played for various Filipino groups and Christian denominations in Christchurch. There are at least five Filipino choirs in Christchurch, four of them church-based, including the Seventh Day Adventist Filipino Singers (fig. 5.2).

5.2: Seventh Day Adventist Cultural Programme 2008 – Filipino SDA Singers



<sup>169</sup> Original text in Appendix B: Chapter 5.3

As children of the brides and skilled migrants grew up, concern that they might not know and recognise “Filipino culture” became rife among parents in the diaspora. Sporting events were organised to promote sports among migrants. Basketball and volleyball teams were organised. As previously mentioned the PCS was formed with the aim of instilling Filipino cultural awareness, integrated lessons on native dances and songs with sports events with the specific aim of educating children (of mixed marriages and Filipino parentage) about Filipino heritage and culture.

Increasing Filipino population, organisation, and networks in the 1990s allowed for another transition. Religiosity, which all along was an important orientation within the lives of Filipino migrants, finally found expression in the celebration of the bigger *fiesta* replicating the hometown *fiesta*. In 1993, the Filipino Catholic Community was formed in Auckland and organised the first *fiesta* of the Immaculate Conception. In 1994 and 2003, the *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta* was celebrated in Auckland and Christchurch respectively (see next chapter, pp. 304-305, 314-316).

### **Filipino identifying characteristics and group identities**

Central to the existence of Filipinos in New Zealand is a strong feeling of affiliation with other Filipinos, and a sense of group identity, in terms of their

own small groups and the larger circle of affiliate groups. Filipinos tend to look for other Filipinos in new areas and bond with them. Small and informal groups abound in Christchurch, Auckland, Geraldine, Timaru, Dunedin, Invercargill and Nelson. In a focus group discussion (FGD) of five migrants in the suburbs of Christchurch, Christopher, the group leader, sheds light on Filipino bonding, and why they like being with other Filipinos/*Pinoys*:

The Filipino can be depended upon anytime. Who else will be helping each other? Will the Kiwi help each other? They would rather go to the police. But the *Pinoy*, they will go the extra mile to help another *Pinoy*.<sup>170</sup>

In addition to dependability, ‘Pinoy humour’ is pointed out as key in giving the diaspora a “happy” ambience. In a conversation with a couple, Fannie and John, the Filipino sense of humour came out as a distinguishing mark of the Filipino/*Pinoy*. Fannie thinks Filipinos’ perspective on life and sense of humour is different from other nationalities because *Pinoys* make light of everything through jokes.

It is because we Filipinos have a sense of humour, isn’t it? Then... we have a positive outlook in life. I mean, I am not saying that their outlook is not positive.<sup>171</sup>

Her husband John agrees and recalls how his Kiwi workmates could not appreciate his *Pinoy* humour,

It is difficult to joke with them... Sometimes you see... wait, what I said was a joke, why did they not laugh? They are

---

<sup>170</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 5.4

<sup>171</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 5.5

serious... So what I actually do I no longer have joking conversations with them. So we just talk about serious things. It's difficult to joke, because afterwards, he thinks your joke is true. Later, he recalls that and say, "John, you said it like this...." "Man, that was a joke!"<sup>172</sup>

Mat, who was taken as a young boy by his New Zealand bride mother notes, "Filipino jokes are different from New Zealander's."<sup>173</sup> He talks about his six month visit to the Philippines and swears, "I liked my life there." Asked what he liked about his visit, speaking in Taglish (mixed Tagalog and English):

They're (the Filipinos) fun... They always laugh... you know... they always smile... happy... Even if you don't have money, or there is nothing to eat I don't know why, they're just happy.... You know... I said, "this is weird".... Because here if they have no money ... (they are) depressed... angry... you know... (laughs) Even when the whites have money, they're grumpy.<sup>174</sup>

In addition to self-perceived quality of "happiness" among Filipinos,<sup>175</sup> participants in the FGD while admitting that New Zealand is their new home, the Philippines remain their 'real home'. Trips to their hometowns are expressed as "coming home" (*pag-uwi*). Christopher tries to explain this common longing for home:

I know all Filipinos miss the Philippines. I try to do that every year, just to go home and see my family.<sup>176</sup> I will not exchange her (Philippines) for another country... If you say that because we are here, we throw it away... No, no we are not exchanging our

---

<sup>172</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 5.6

<sup>173</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 5.7

<sup>174</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 5.8

<sup>175</sup> The Philippines is not in the top ten of the world's happiest people. See link: [http://worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/hap\\_nat/nat\\_fp.php?mode=1](http://worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/hap_nat/nat_fp.php?mode=1)

<sup>176</sup> Christopher migrated with his nuclear family, so this means extended family.

country. That is still the same. We accept her (the Philippines) for what she is. Everything, good and bad. You will go home and still feel the same. That's the way it is. You will still go home. There are many I know who will save just to go home.<sup>177</sup>

This resonates with Brah's (1996, p. 192) assertion that "home is the mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination." However, even if the feeling of nostalgia for the homeland is prevalent, migrants at the same time are grounded in the present in their home-making efforts. "Making home is about *creating* both pasts and futures through inhabiting grounds of the present" (Ahmed, Castaneda, Fortier and Sheller 2003, p. 9). Since coming home is always limited by the availability of funds and time, like the brides, skilled migrants found ways of reconstructing the remembered ambience of the hometown *fiesta* through regular weekend Filipino barbie gatherings among small circles of friends. As shown in the discussion, Filipino migrants engage in community building processes through regular social interactions and ritual observances.

The Filipino diaspora bonding and identification comes from an imagined dispositional perception of who and what Filipinos are on the one hand (happy, dependable, hospitable, generous, humorous, religious) and on the other hand, the memorialisation of home where the rest of the family lives. While the Filipino's perception of humour is connected to their enjoyment of

---

<sup>177</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 5.9

Filipino gatherings, on a deeper level these represent their ‘home’ replicated in the diaspora. I have previously mentioned the migrant diaspora’s “creative tension” between “home and dispersion” (Brah 1996, pp. 192-193) which is sometimes called the third space (Bhabha 1994) or dual consciousness (Dayal 1996). This tension is felt more poignantly by first generation Filipino migrants who while longing for their homeland and return also realise that New Zealand has become their home.

### **Filipino transnational migration and the family**

According to Bourdieu (1998, p. 69) the “family plays a decisive role in the maintenance of the social order... that is, reproduction of the structure of social space and social relations.” The FGD session revealed notions of the Filipino family, class and identity. According to Christopher:

Of course, when you think of it (migration), you think of yourself first. The effect on the country (Philippines) just follows....If you have a family, you think of what’s good for your family first. You will do it (migration) because it’s good for your family.<sup>178</sup>

The group murmurs in agreement. The composition of the group itself reflects close family associations. Of the five, two are siblings (brother and sister), the other two are their marriage partners (wife and husband), and the remaining one is a close family friend. Jasper, the family friend, agrees:

---

<sup>178</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 5.10



[W]hat they are saying is true... it's for the family... for the future of the children. Because, we have jobs (in the Philippines), but the future of the children... We (who are) here (in NZ), the reason why we got out of the Philippines .... Our purpose for coming here, why we came to New Zealand, number one really, is the future of the children. Even if you are established there (Philippines), you have a good job, your salary is good, but how about the children?<sup>179</sup>

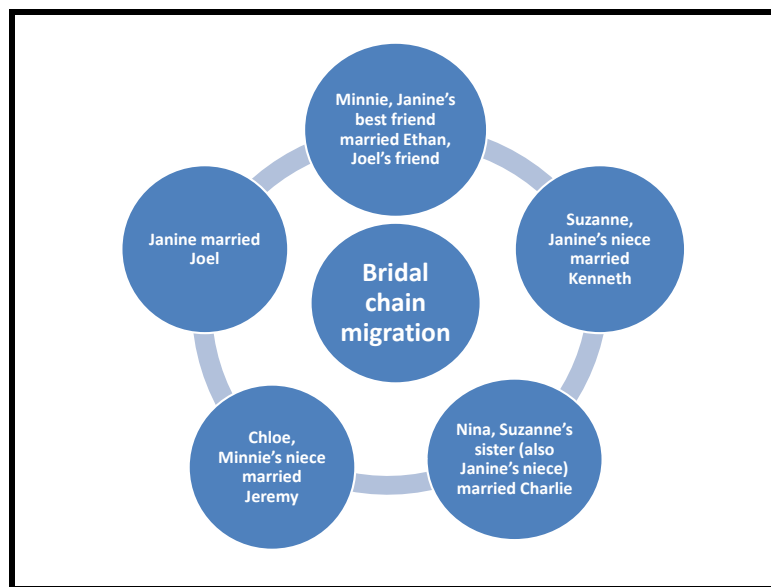
From the conversation, it was clear that higher salaries and other professional benefits that come with overseas employment derive their importance from their contribution to improving the family's lifestyle and assuring a financially secure future. Cost-benefit considerations in migration are not by themselves the ultimate goal of Filipino migrants, but are intertwined with the centrality of the family and its welfare and survival. As previously discussed in chapter four the family is the foundational institution seen exercising significant influence in the social, political and religious spheres of Philippine society. Migration is usually a family decision, and therefore the family members (even distant kin in some cases) help in raising the funds to finance the migration process. Bourdieu's (1986) notion of social capital when applied to Filipino transnational migration is linked to the family and social network.

The family also plays an important role in chain migration (Cabilao 1992; Pingol 1992; Tacoli 1999). Pingol (1992, p. 111), in her study of a village in Northern Philippines, noted that when one sibling migrates, "the younger

---

<sup>179</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 5.11

siblings... wait for their chance to go abroad.” There are some cases of chain migration among former office colleagues, family and friends in Christchurch. An interesting circle of Filipinas married to New Zealand men in Christchurch came in a series of bridal chain migration facilitated by mail correspondence (see illustration below).



The bridal circle’s story starts with Janine, who after more than six months of correspondence and phone calls, married Joel, a New Zealander, and relocated to New Zealand. Minnie, Janine’s best friend in the Philippines, kept in touch with her. When Ethan, one of Joel’s friends expressed his wish to marry a Filipina, Janine and Joel introduced Minnie to Ethan. After some months of correspondence, Ethan went to the Philippines to meet and marry Minnie, who came back with him to New Zealand. Janine later introduced her niece,

Suzanne, to another New Zealand friend, Kenneth. Suzanne married Kenneth and came to New Zealand. Suzanne then introduced her sister Nina (also Janine's niece) to Charlie, her husband Kenneth's friend. After some months of mail correspondence courtship, Charlie went to the Philippines and married Nina who also relocated to New Zealand. Meanwhile, Minnie introduced her niece, Chloe, to her husband Ethan's friend, Jeremy. After some months of correspondence, Jeremy went to the Philippines to marry Chloe, who joined him in New Zealand. Thus, Janine was joined by her nieces Suzanne and Nina, while Minnie, her best friend, was joined by her niece Chloe. Together they form a small circle of family and affinal relations in Christchurch.

Filipino families most of the time have the same religion, or belong to a common church. Church organisations function as quasi family or kin, providing assistance in the migration process. There were at least three cases of family migration assisted by a church community or church organisation such as the CFC and the SDA with a chapter or branch in New Zealand cities.

### **The 'Pinoy' identity, family, regionalism and class distinction**

In the late 1970s, the term *Pinoy*, earlier used in the 1920s by Filipino American expatriates, became popular, and has since become the demonym (colloquial) used by Filipinos as self designated identity. The "Filipino" and

“Pinoy” identities emerged within a century apart from each other, and are relatively novel compared to regional identifications (such as Ilocano/a, Ilonggo/a, Cebuanos/a, Kapampangan, Pangasinense, Bicolano/a, Waray, Boholano/a, Igorot, etc.). Regional disunity was deliberately maintained by the Spaniards and Americans to prevent the formation of a cohesive national identity to preserve colonial rule. Regional stereo-typing and division among Filipinos continue up to the present, and are manifested in the diaspora’s small language-based circles. Even when all the informants in Christchurch claim a common “*Pinoy*” identity, historically, Filipinos have never been a homogenous people, even if there is a sense of belonging to one nation among them. The Filipino defining values of *utang na loob* and the *bayanihan* spirit or community self-help system of mutual assistance also figure in the fostering of small group loyalties and disunity that extends to the diaspora. Diasporas are far from homogenous because they are “full of divisions and dissent” even when they recognise “collective responsibilities” to the homeland and co-ethnics (Werbner 2004, p. 896). The migrants’ sense of belonging and loyalty centred on the family, circle of friends/class and region, are expressed through diasporic clusters and groupings, interactions, and contestations.

Like the family and kin, class is an important dimension of Filipino group clusters. In most Filipino lowland cultures, the stratification of society is quite

pronounced. Professionals and bosses are addressed with deference, mostly using titles such as Doctor, Attorney, Engineer, etc. Parties and functions would always have a “presidential table” which is placed on an elevated dais or the most visible place so the “Very Important People” (VIPs), usually composed of the elite rich, politicians, priests and nuns, are seen. The plates, utensils, and dishes on this table are better presented and prepared than the rest. While this practice has disappeared in urban centres, it has remained in rural areas and partly provides an explanation of contestations in local leadership positions because they allow access to prestige.

In a conversation, Lucy, an informant mentioned that one of the reasons she likes New Zealand is because “everyone is the same” and that it is more “egalitarian.” She considers the freedom to address people by name, including her boss and graduate lecturers, an important dimension of New Zealand egalitarianism. However, her explanation of her inner circle of friends subtly indicates class distinction:

“We are almost the same age generation, we have the same interests, almost the same level of educational attainment, we are all professionals...” (original in English)

While Lucy enjoys her liberation from the homeland’s hierarchical demands, she is careful to maintain class parameters in her chosen inner-circle of professionals in the diaspora.

Christopher, referring to some Filipinos who felt slighted because they were not invited to a party they hosted asks, “Is it a requirement to relate with every Filipino? It’s not. It is a matter of choice” (original in English). His wife Abbie agrees:

It’s not a matter of (Filipino) unity or disunity... that’s a choice.  
... They wanna be there, but they cannot be there because we  
don’t want them there. We did not invite them. (original in  
English)

At first glance, the claim to personal choice of friends seems reasonable enough, except for certain subtle indicators. Christopher and Abbie, aside from being well-off, are also politically connected. Abbie comes from a well-known elite political clan in the northern Philippines. Since they ‘screen’ the guests in their parties, to be invited to their party is considered an indication of acceptance to an elite group in the diaspora. Like language and regional affiliation, class figures in diasporic circles. Justina, a New Zealand bride who has been in New Zealand for twenty-one years, provides additional insight into existing class boundaries among Filipinos:

I am still closer to Filipinos. But I only mix with those who are  
also on the same level with me... not with those who have  
money... because they will look down on you... (laughs). I can  
feel that it is like that. That is what I say to them, I will stick with  
those in the same level so I don’t hear any gossip...<sup>180</sup>

While most Filipinos in New Zealand contend that there is more equality between them, social hierarchies/stratification remains in evidence.

---

<sup>180</sup> See original text in Appendix B Chapter 5.12

Indications exist that class is also involved in the gap between the New Zealand brides and skilled migrants. Pauline gives an indication of the different levels of ‘othering’ experienced by Filipinos in New Zealand. First, the seeming gap between the New Zealand brides and the relatively newly arrived skilled migrants:

Now, I don’t like the newcomers against the old ones... there are a lot of things being said... They say. “the old ones (NZ brides) if they didn’t marry (Kiwis) they will not be able to come to New Zealand.” My response to them is, “You, (*Kayo*) if New Zealand didn’t need (skilled workers) you will also not be here. Even then, if you wanted to come before, you will not be able to enter. Which is true... Perhaps there’s a lot of words exchanged.... (original in English)

Pauline also reveals the issue of ‘othering’ among New Zealand brides:

Okay, so they married people with money, they don’t have to work... that’s also okay... But at the same time, it is irritating even the old-timers who came from humble beginnings ... when they marry moneyed men they also behave like they are above the others.... (original in English)

The division among Filipinos is thus subtly based on class distinction: between the New Zealand brides or older Filipino residents and the new skilled migrants; between the New Zealand brides who have to work and those that do not have to work; between skilled migrants, between the farm-hands and blue collar and the white collar professionals. This resonates with Van der Kroef’s (1966-1967, pp. 326-327) account of Filipino migrants in the U.S. in the 1960s:

Despite persistent appeals to national unity... Filipinos ... are bound by small group loyalties that pit what is commonly held as *tayo-tayo* ("just us") mentality against transcendent interests. (italics mine)

Contestations occur not only in secular groupings but also among religious groups, Catholics and Protestants alike. An anecdotal account of the splintering of a Filipino evangelical group shows that church groups are also vulnerable to splits arising from disagreements. The said group had about a hundred members, until it was rocked by internal quarrels. The membership then was divided into some factions, and the attendance at church services went down drastically.

The nation is an “imagined political community” (Anderson [1983] 1991, p. 6). Thus identities based on the nation are imagined identities. The Filipino identity is no exception. Werbner (2005, p. 547) points out that “[m]ultiple discourses, internal dissent, and competition” cutting across “sectarian, gendered, or political groups,” occur among migrants even as they identify themselves with the same diaspora. The diaspora even as it claims a common identity remains a contested domain. This does not mean, however, that the Filipino identity does not exist, but that it is marked with multiplicities and divisions that spans across region, language and class. The Filipino identity is a work-in-progress, both in the homeland and among diasporic communities,



where various stake holders take part in spirited contestations. Resonating with Werbner's observation, Clifford (1994, p. 184) looks at diasporas as "differentiated, heterogeneous, contested spaces" even as they construct a common identity.

### **Folk Christianity, agency, luck (*swerte*) and destiny (*kapalaran*)**

Like other ethno-national diasporas, the Filipino diaspora in New Zealand remains a multi-vocal and contested space. However, while far from homogenous, diaspora life is also interspersed with moments of unity occurring mostly in the religious sphere, particularly in Christian rituals or in the presence of sacred icons. As previously mentioned, the EDSA people's power revolution, a highly political event which ousted Marcos, used religious symbols such as the Blessed Virgin Mary and the rosary ritual prayer to rally unity among the people gathered in the streets in a face-off with Marcos's military loyalists (see pp. 208-209). In a similar manner, secular and religious rituals through Independence Day commemorations and *fiesta* celebrations in the diaspora prove to be reliable venues for unity despite competitive rivalries. However, the boundaries between secular and religious activities are fluid. The Independence Day ceremony has religious aspects. In the Philippines, there is a special mass in all parishes. Even the President of the Republic is expected to attend a mass to pray for the country. Filipino gatherings in New Zealand

reflect the same sacred-secular connection. The Labour day weekend during which all Filipino organisations in the North and South Island gather, while supposedly a secular sports and cultural gathering, takes on a *fiesta* like form. The gathering starts with the celebration of the mass, and there is a prayer at the beginning of activities.

The importance of religion as part of Filipino identity and family tradition came out in the FGD. Most of the participants believe that the practice of Filipino religions and traditions should be maintained because it is part of being 'Filipino'. Weng (Christopher's sister), a newly arrived parent with growing children explains:

That is the first message of our elders. They told me, 'Make sure that you don't forget your religiosity that you've been raised to in the Philippines.' Among us (Filipinos), religion is something that keeps us strong. And our values evolved from our religion. The way we care about people, came from our religion. That is the pillar of religion... so here, it should be the same... at school with my kids ... when I see this person, I will trust him right away, because I know that he is a Christian... He is a Catholic... definitely, we have the same values. There is something that binds you. You don't get lost even in a foreign land. Your adjustment becomes easier and lighter. It is difficult to adjust because you have been up-rooted.<sup>181</sup>

Her husband, Lolong, despite claiming to be an ordinary guy who was not really very religious, attributes all his life's achievements and success to God,

---

<sup>181</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 5.13

I was able to come here because of my prayers to God. We are not super religious, but we have a novena as a married couple... as a couple we have our own novena.<sup>182</sup>

Annie, another skilled migrant, believes that religion and faith are important, and they become more important when one is far from home,

Our religious belief... that is the only thing that keeps you strong in a foreign land. It gives you inner strength... There is someone (God) to call ... it is part of us (Filipinos)... prayer.<sup>183</sup>

Religion for her is not just about belief, but also about Filipino identity.

The passing on of Filipino culture and values are of utmost importance among parents deeply concerned about the effect of “foreign values” on their children.

Weng insists on her children’s upbringing as Catholics:

The good thing (about this) is the children are in a Catholic school. You cannot take away our concern about their personal growth; the discipline, the (Filipino) values should still be there. Because when you are in another country, it’s difficult when you’re young. Moving into a new culture and moving into a new system can destroy values. That’s the consideration, that the values are not destroyed. One major factor why we moved to a place like this was the presence of a Catholic school just beside here where their faith, values and discipline could be nurtured. The source of our values continues still.<sup>184</sup>

Folk religiosity runs deep in the Filipino psyche, because it is part of the family’s socialization, and supported by the local community’s socio-religious

---

<sup>182</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 5.14

<sup>183</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 5.15

<sup>184</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 5.16

practices, like the hometown *novenas* and *fiestas*. For some, migration has not only heightened the sense of religious identity, but has also triggered concerns about cultural maintenance and transmission.

Folk religiosity as a source of comfort and assurance in the face of risk taking also surfaced. Perhaps the uncertainty and instability of migration provokes a return to deeply ingrained folk religious cosmological notions. In one Christchurch Filipino gathering, a few gathered in conversation after the meal. A migrant, Jessie, related the story of his close brush with death towards the end of his contract in an African diamond mine. While Jessie and the other Filipinos in the mine were all made aware that the place was dangerous due to armed rebels proliferating in the area, they were given assurance that the workers' settlement quarters was heavily fortified. Company personnel also forged an informal deal with the outlaws, it was said, to give something in cash or in kind to keep them from staging ambushes on company convoys' regular trips to the city for supplies and recreation. Jessie found the rules imposed on workers inside the mine (to prevent diamond poaching) too strict and restrictive. In his final year, he decided not to renew his contract and to try his *swerte* (luck) somewhere else. He was a bit uncertain if he would do well somewhere else, but decided to take the chance, telling himself, "God will take

care of whatever happens, I don't like it here anymore".<sup>185</sup> On the day of his departure, his Filipino co-workers who had also become his *barkada* (pals/mates) asked him to stay one day longer so they could all go to the city together. He refused to stay longer and told them that he would wait for them in the city instead. He waited for them to arrive the following day, but they failed to show up on the agreed time. Later, he received news that his friends were ambushed by an armed group, and were all killed.<sup>186</sup> Asked how he felt, he told us, "That's how life really is. Each person's luck is different. If it's your time (to die), it's your time. It can happen anywhere."<sup>187</sup>

Some of those gathered told him that the reason he was not among those who died was because his *oras* or time is not yet up. Obviously his *kapalaran* is different and that he has not yet attained the *kapalaran* God has planned for him. Notably, this table conversation reflected the group's belief that God has particular control of *swerte* (luck) and *kapalaran* (destiny), in this particular case, the ultimate of all, life and death. More importantly, Jessie agreed with them believing in the unique *swerte* and *kapalaran* which brought him to New Zealand rather than death in Africa. Thus, life, luck and destiny are all in God's benevolent hands.

---

<sup>185</sup> See original text in Appendix B Chapter 5.17

<sup>186</sup> One reached the hospital alive but also died afterwards. Jessie was able to talk to him before he died.

<sup>187</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 5.18

There is a popular Filipino saying, “*Kung hindi ukol, hindi bubukol*,” meaning, whatever is not meant for you, is not meant for you. Sheila puts it simply,

What is meant for Peter is meant for Peter alone, and what is meant for John is meant for John alone. Peter is not meant to have what John has, and John is not meant to have what Peter has.<sup>188</sup>

When one searches for one’s *kapalaran*, one is hopeful that it is good or that despite the odds, one gets lucky. However, God needs to be asked. As previously mentioned (see pp. 156-158, 166-167) the vow or *panata* is framed within Filipino reciprocal relations. Some migrants in Christchurch, according to their informant friends, made the sacrifice of walking on their knees from the back row of the church to the altar as they prayed the novena for their New Zealand overseas job and visa approval. Izza, an informant, confided that when she was preparing for her medical board exams, she made a *panata* to do a novena and pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Clare of Assisi.<sup>189</sup> She also donated a few crates of eggs to the Poor Clare Sisters in advance gratitude for the expected outcome of passing the medical board examinations. When she passed, she attributed it to the assistance and benevolence of God through St. Clare’s mediation. Afterwards, when she was applying for a job and visa to North America (prior to her NZ migration), even when everything was in place because of her family’s

---

<sup>188</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 5.19

<sup>189</sup> All her family and friends also helped in praying for her success in the exams.

stable settlement there, a *panata* was also made and fulfilled in exchange of an immigrant visa and safe journey. Rene, another informant, explains:

Everything I asked [from God] has always been given so it's up to me to vow reciprocation in recognition of the favours I have been given.<sup>190</sup>

Rene's notion of reciprocity induced his *panata* of prayers and ritual participation.

### **Homeland remembrance and 'home' reconstruction through the sacred**

There are three distinct popular occasions for family and community gatherings in the Philippines, all with religious flavour: the hometown *fiesta*; Christmas Aguinaldo masses or *Simbang Gabi*; and the most colourfully dramatic Lenten season. In New Zealand, migrants confided they "missed" the Philippines most intensely during the hometown *fiesta*, Christmas and Lent. While most are comfortable with the Catholic Church's generic observance of liturgical seasons, they also noted the stark contrast between the "ambience" of home rituals and their present locations in New Zealand. Migrants' retention of homeland memories is expressed semantically by time and spatial references of "then and there"-- *doon sa amin noon* (literal translation is there in our place then) in contrast to the "here now", meaning where they are in New Zealand at present-- *dito ngayon*. Notably the possessive pronoun *amin* is

---

<sup>190</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 5.20

used when referring to the Philippines, and disappears when referring to New Zealand. Different Filipino migrant communities strive to mediate this gap with Filipino observances and rituals.

The New Zealand Catholic Church has seen an increase in membership from various ethnicities and cultural groups around the world since the late 1980s and has been a venue for multicultural mixing and interaction, with both positive and negative outcomes.<sup>191</sup> The Auckland Archdiocese<sup>192</sup> and Christchurch Diocese have seen an increasing Filipino presence in various parish churches. Popular devotions and the *fiesta* have for more than a decade consistently raised awareness of the presence of Filipinos in the New Zealand Catholic Church. However, while joining the Catholic New Zealanders in different parishes, Filipino migrants have introduced their own brand of Catholicism by organising regional novena groups named after their sacred icons and starting *fiesta* celebrations.<sup>193</sup> Different *fiesta* celebrations mark the seasons of the year in the Auckland Filipino Chaplaincy in addition to the weekly Filipino Chaplaincy masses. Filipino *fiesta* celebrations affirm the significance of the Church in migrant home-making and belonging. It is the place where community rituals are performed, and thus the locus of Filipino

---

<sup>191</sup> Informants note that racial discrimination remains a problem in New Zealand, including the Catholic Church, but most attribute it to a lack of understanding and cultural sensitivity.

<sup>192</sup> The Filipino Chaplaincy in Auckland was established in 1997 and in Christchurch in 2007.

<sup>193</sup> In some cases, these groups also organise basketball and volleyball teams for the regular sports competitions. Novena groups have choirs that sing in the chaplaincy masses.



gatherings forging community solidarity. Boissevain (1969b, p. 59) in his study of a Maltese village observed:

The *fiesta* is thus an occasion on which communal values are reaffirmed and strengthened, as individuals and groups express their loyalty to their patron saint and unite to defend and enhance the reputation of their village. At the same time, the central position which the Church occupies in the social structure is strongly reinforced, for the parish church is the hub around which this festive occasion turns. (*italics mine*)

The main *fiesta* in Auckland is celebrated on December 8<sup>th</sup> (or the weekend following to allow for bigger attendance) in honour of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, the official national patroness of the Philippine islands. Regional migrant groups sponsor the *fiesta* of their regional holy patrons; for example, migrants from Surigao sponsor the *fiesta* of *San Nicolas* (St. Nicholas) every September; those from the Bicol region sponsor the *Our Lady of Peñafrancia fiesta* in August; those from Pangasinan sponsor the *Our Lady of Manaoag fiesta* in April; those from Iloilo and Western Visayas sponsor the *Our Lady of Candelaria fiesta* in February and migrants from Cebu and Leyte organise the *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta*<sup>194</sup> every January in Auckland and Christchurch respectively.

The frequency of *fiesta* celebrations among Filipino migrants attests to its significance in migrant life. Smith-Shank (2002, p. 57) offers an explanation:

---

<sup>194</sup> The *Santo Niño* is the popular patron of Eastern Visayas, which include Cebu, Leyte, Samar, and Bohol.

Festivity and celebration are important to both individuals and communities. They provide relief from the day-to-day activities of human life and are welcome as events of fun, reward, hope, and order...Sensory and festive accessories such as special lights and candles, plants, incense, colors, body adornment, food, and drink trigger our memories. Celebrations are also marked by ritual behaviors: blowing out the candles, marching in parades, competing in sporting events, singing songs, eating special foods and drinking special beverages, making toasts, cutting cake, and reciting lore... Cycles of anticipation and remembering are significant human rituals that give meaning and coherence to our lives...

It is also evident that international religious institutions such as the Catholic Church have allowed specific indigenous expressions and practices within the overarching generic form of its rites. Among Filipino Catholics, distinctions exist in terms of the icon of devotion and the cultural practices that come with such devotions. Hence, the *fiestas* celebrated throughout the year reflect diverse practices of the devotees' origins from the archipelago.

Auckland and Christchurch have monthly Filipino chaplaincy masses (and also Wellington though I was unable to observe them). Popular *Marian* religious practices to the Mother of Perpetual Help, Our Lady of Lourdes and Our Lady of Fatima have a significant following among Filipino families in Christchurch. Active members of the Legion of Mary facilitate the icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary's weekly visit to willing Filipino homes in Christchurch since the 1990s.

In February 2007, five Filipinas started the Wednesday novena to the Mother of Perpetual Help in a Christchurch parish even when a Saturday novena was already in place in another parish, because, as previously stated, in the Philippines it is held on Wednesday. Also, the Saturday novena initially organised by other Asian Catholics, has a different set of songs and prayers, thus, the novena was deemed different -- *iba naman* (Tagalog) or *lain man* (Cebuano) -- and therefore posed difficulties of identification. Understandably, the novena followed the structure and prayers of their memory. Thus, when the ritual is seen to be unfamiliar and done in a “different way” by other Catholic ethnic communities, the ritual is “indigenised” or *Filipinized*, to resemble the practice back home. The common anthropological observation, as expressed by Bourdieu (1984, p.172) that “social identity is defined and asserted through difference” thus finds resonance in the Filipinos’ process of distinction and identification within the sphere of the Catholic Church’s commonly observed practices. This also connects with the diaspora’s distinct identity and “sense of being a ‘people’ with historical roots and destinies” (see p. 207-209) which are not separatist, even if there are such moments (Clifford 1994, pp. 310-311).

### **Religious icons and the Filipino home and culture**

Filipino Catholics exhibit a strong attachment to sacred icons, which also play the central role in the *fiesta* celebrations. Jasmine, a nurse, who works as a

caregiver, showed me the small icon of the *Santo Niño* she took along with her on her journey, including a novena prayer booklet, “I pray privately here at the flat. I grew up with this devotion in Cebu.”<sup>195</sup> After marrying a Kiwi a few years later, she used the small icon to decorate her husband’s car. Cuba and Hummon (1993) state:

[T]he home sustains place identity in large part because it is a veritable storehouse of identity symbols. Treasured domestic objects-which serve as personal and public signs of the self-are themselves largely mobile, and can be used ritually to transform a new house into an old home. Such personalization of new dwellings through mementos has been noted to be of particular importance to older Americans, enabling the construction of a coherent sense of personal place identity in the face of considerable mobility ...

A significant number of migrants in Christchurch and surrounding areas carried sacred icons when they migrated. One visual sign of a Filipino Catholic home (fig. 5.3a, b), contrasting perhaps with Anglo-European Catholics, is the presence of religious icons. Iconic presence in migrant homes incorporates the sacred as part of the family, thus establishing access to the sacred. At the same time, the iconic display in Filipino homes highlights once again the importance of religion in migrant home-making. The presence of the icon sacralises migrant spaces and transforms them into homes. Tuan (1977, p. 159) notes that homeland memorial landmarks and sacred shrines enhance people’s social memory and sense of identity. Sacred places deemed to be the

---

<sup>195</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 5.21

repository of the divine warrant a pilgrim's journey. Pilgrimage, according to Sallnow (1987, p. 3), connects the two disparate worlds of the sacred and material by facilitating a space for a "rendezvous" with the divine. Pilgrims move towards the immobile holy icon in a specified and bounded sacred site, while in the transnational journey, migrant devotees move outward from the country of origin into the country of destination with the sacred icons (replicas of the icon in the pilgrim shrine) who assume the transient status of its devotees as it "moves out" from the original site of the shrine to the land of settlement. Sacred icons provide the symbolic presence of the home they have left behind in the new home they create even if their stay, as in the case of contract workers, is only short-term.

5.3a Filipino home altar



Geraldine – South Island

5.3b Filipino home altar



Christchurch City

Werbner (1995, p. 309) acknowledges the significance of religious praxes in claiming and sanctifying space by noting the "complex symbolic

connotations” that makes spatial conquest and “its inscription with a new moral and cultural surface ... an act of human empowerment.” Many Catholic religious rituals involve processions: an encircling movement of devotees from the church to the community and back to the church. In lowland Philippines, the *fiesta* procession of people and sacred icon circling the town is a sacralising movement, an act of the town’s dedication under the icon’s protection, inscribing the town space with a distinct identity. Thus the convergence of people in spatial sacred performances like the procession performed by the migrants in New Zealand during *fiesta* celebrations is an act of identity inscription.

As previously stated, sacred icons are important figures among Catholic diasporas in the United States, for example the *La Madonna* among the Italian-Americans, the “Our Lady of Charity” among Cuban-Americans, and the icon of *El Señor de los Milagros* among Peruvian-Americans. The “universal” and “local” elements in Catholicism’s *chaordic* character (Werbner 2005) allows assimilation to a common Catholic identity anywhere in the world, while maintaining a unique niche and space for indigenous or folk identity necessary for meaning-making in a new land. The chaordic character of Filipino communities is demonstrated by the relative predictability of its development, while being independent from centralised state and religious institutional

structures, and the spontaneity of religious expressions. While Filipino migrants readily integrate into Catholic Churches anywhere in the world, they continue to practise a “local” religiosity attached to a hometown popular devotion beyond the control of both the homeland and hosting church.

### **Diasporic inclusion and exclusion in the Church and the public space**

Safran (1991, pp. 83-84) outlines six distinguishing characteristics of a diaspora, one of them, “that they are not - and perhaps cannot be - fully accepted by their host society and therefore partly feel alienated and insulated from it”. The diasporic experience of alienation or exclusion may come from important distinctions such as language, cultural practices and ethnicity or race (see also Brah 2000, pp. 208-209). I have also stated at the beginning that migrant diasporic identities are spatially manifested through residential, employment or business enclaves (see discussion on pp. 14-15). There are two prominent venues for expression or manifestation of the Filipino diasporic presence, and its reflexive assessment of acceptance in New Zealand, the Catholic Church and urban public places.

I have earlier mentioned the New Zealand public’s mail-order-brides stereotype as part of the Filipina brides’ experience of ‘exclusion’ and their construction of weekend home barbies as mobile diasporic spaces. I have also

mentioned the diaspora's regular participation in multicultural events. In terms of residential clustering, Auckland's North Shore, is perhaps the most known quasi-Filipino residential enclave (there are also Asian and Pacific clusters). While there are no identifiable and fixed migrant enclaves in Christchurch, in terms of residential space, there are regular clustering in Catholic Churches during Chaplaincy masses, and *fiesta* celebrations in both Auckland and Christchurch. As previously stated, these occasions make the Catholic Church the primary venue for Filipino diasporic spatial presence.

The experience of Filipinos in the Catholic Church while mostly positive also has some sour points. Ideally, Catholic liturgies are inclusive, and any Catholic may participate in any Catholic rite anywhere in the world. New Zealand's parishes in the North and South islands were founded by mostly Irish and English Catholics,<sup>196</sup> and on account of this pioneering role, New Zealand parishes have a more or less an Anglo-Irish ambience. When a Filipino chaplain was assigned as pastor in a Christchurch parish, he noticed that the early Sunday mass had no music and hymns. Since most Sunday masses in the Philippines are sung masses, he wanted to have a choir in that particular mass. No "Kiwi choir" was available, so he asked some Filipinos to form a choir for the mass. There were mixed reactions to this. While some parishioners came

---

<sup>196</sup> The Vicariate of Western Oceania was established by Pope Gregory XVI in 1835, and was part of the French Missions, despite its Irish and English membership.



forward to thank the choir for the singing, there was also a backlash. A few parishioners expressed their disapproval of the “noisy” songs and felt that there should be more silence for prayer. Anonymous letters and e-mails were sent to the Filipino priest in the weeks following the beginning of the sung mass. The priest then asked the choir to limit the songs to the main parts of the mass. However, the complaints continued which not only pertained to the choir but also to the priest’s lengthy homilies. While the complaints were anonymous, there were rumours among Filipinos that they were from white Catholics (*mga puti*). The tension affected the priest’s health. He left for a supposedly short vacation in the Philippines midway in 2007, and never came back. The Diocese appointed another Filipino priest as parish administrator. The Sunday “silent mass” was reinstated indicating that the complaints reached the diocese. Reactions were mixed. Some parishioners requested the parish office to bring the sung mass back, while others welcomed the reinstatement of the silent mass. However, the reinstatement remained. What happened to the Filipino choir indicates that while foreigners are welcome in Catholic parishes, the form of participation and extent of contribution in a parish are subject to the scrutiny of the older and ‘original’ Church groups some of which are as yet unwilling to negotiate religious practices with the ‘other’. There are, however, more welcoming church parish communities. Another Filipino choir has found acceptance and appreciation in a small

suburban parish in Christchurch. The Kiwi priest, each time the Filipino choir sang, would ask the gathered congregation to applaud them for their “wonderful singing”. *Pakeha* parishioners would come over to thank members of the choir after the mass. Another good example would be the Filipino Seventh Day Adventists who were given support and encouragement by a Kiwi pastor at the time they were planning to start a new worship service for Filipinos. While acceptance and tolerance may be a good thing, Hage (1998, pp. 17-18) noting the contrasting dispositions of intolerance and tolerance among Australian racists and multiculturalists, has this to say:

Both the racists and the multiculturalists shared in the conviction that they were ... masters of national space, and that it was up to them to decide who stayed in and who ought to be kept out of that space... This White belief in one’s mastery over the nation, whether in the form of a White multiculturalism or in the form of White racism, is what I have called the ‘White Nation’ fantasy... a fantasy of White supremacy.

Evidently, this is also true in multicultural New Zealand, as seen from the Filipino experience.

There are no known migrant enclaves in terms of employment or business in Christchurch. However, two migrant groups have appropriated particular types of business activities; the Indians are known as dairy owners, while the Koreans run laundry shops. Filipinos generally are skilled employees. Thus their assessment of acceptance or discrimination from those they perceive as

“white racists” (*mga puti na racist*) are attached to their work experiences which I present here.

Pauline worked as a receptionist in a bank to answer phone queries from clients. While most are polite according to her, the rude ones will point out one’s ‘foreign-ness’ right after the greetings:

“Where are you from?”

“Philippines.”

“Can you speak English?”

“That’s why I’m talking to you in English.”

“I can’t understand you.”

“Okay, I’ll speak slowly.”

That’s the way they are. But sometimes the Asians are even worse. Oh, ya. Especially the ... (East Asian nationals). They are very arrogant because they think they’ve got the money... they’re the customers. Until now... some customers are like that, they want it right now...

A Filipino engineer, Sammy notes:

Their discrimination is not noticeable (subtle), because they know it is not allowed. But you will see it in the way they treat you. For example, you are saying something, then he will answer, ‘What? Say that again please.’ So you will repeat it again, and you will really say it very slowly, but then it’s the same, ‘What? I can’t understand you.’ But you know he understood what you said. Oh, please, I’ve been to Europe and did my MA (Master of Arts) there, why is it that they are able to understand me there, and not here?<sup>197</sup>

From the narratives language emerges as a tool for expressing racial dominance in the workplace.

---

<sup>197</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 5.22

The seeming stereotype of Filipino migrants as holding low paying jobs was also mentioned. Fely, a New Zealand bride, has a BSBA degree (Bachelor of Science in Business Administration) and graduated with honours (*cum laude*) before she married Jonathan, a *Pakeha*. While walking in the CBD, she noticed a placement agency with a list of job vacancies:

I came in to inquire about the jobs but was told, 'We do not have any vacancy for cleaners.' So I told them, 'I'm not applying to be a cleaner. I am interested in the other jobs.' And they said, 'Oh...'

Some Filipinos admitted their initial frustration at being demoted or doing a job they considered as a few ranks lower than their position in the Philippines. An accountant who has worked as a manager in one of the largest oil companies in the Philippines had to work her way up from a book keeper. Another who had worked as a university lecturer started work as a computer consultant. However, despite the seeming 'demotion' at the beginning, they all seem well-adjusted in New Zealand and are quite content with their new lifestyle.

From some accounts, New Zealand's public spaces are also venues for discrimination, with at least three experiences of physical vandalism by some Christchurch *Pakeha* youth. A popular story circulating in the diaspora was about a Filipina nurse who was pelted with eggs in the face by a group of

*Pakeha* youngsters while walking towards the bus station after her evening duty. Another Filipina, Berna, suffered a similar plight:

We were walking because we were looking for 'for rent' flats. There was a car that speeded past us...afterwards, I felt something hit me here (indicating side of a thigh). When I looked, there were eggs thrown at me... those crazy Kiwi kids... It was painful.... Mean ....<sup>198</sup>

Yet another was not only pelted with eggs by occupants of a speeding car but also told to 'go home' to her country.

The most striking story comes from a Filipino couple, Bobby and Jean, who experienced verbal abuse while crossing a street with their baby:

We were crossing the street, then suddenly they (*Pakeha* youth) started shouting 'f... you' at us, and then, "Go home to your country!" We were afraid about what they will do to us. We had our baby with us. We like Christchurch because we thought it is a lot better than the Middle East because we can be Christians openly without any problem. We worked for a time in Saudi Arabia, you see, and we have never experienced being abused like that. It was a shock for us to be treated like that in Christchurch.<sup>199</sup>

Locals (meaning those who consider themselves native/indigenous to the locality) and nationals (citizens of the nation-state) often view migrants as threats to the local/national culture and identity. Hage (1998, pp. 39-40) explains:

---

<sup>198</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 5.23

<sup>199</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 5.24

The expressed wish to send undesirable others to their 'home' is a clear nationalist desire... even if it involves a racial categorisation of those one wishes to see 'go home'. In the desire to send the other 'home', subjects express implicitly their own desire to be at home. In every 'go home', there is an 'I want to and am entitled to feel at home in my nation'.

Incidents of verbal abuse and egg pelting on account of difference in colour, ethnicity, culture or religion, indicate that ethnocentrism and racism, while considered politically incorrect in New Zealand's postmodern times, do persist in various forms, and are part of diasporic experiences of exclusion, alienation and discrimination (Vertovec 1999b, p. 8). Notably, white nationalism is almost always directed at particular non-European looking ethnics or citizens as illustrated by the controversy that came with a popular TVNZ host/commentator's suggestion to Prime Minister John Key that he should appoint a Governor General who looks like a New Zealander (the Governor General then was of South Asian descent). Hall (1990, p. 228) speaks of the Black diaspora experience:

We belong to the marginal, the underdeveloped, the periphery, the 'Other'... at the outer edge, the 'rim', of the metropolitan world - always 'South' to someone else's El Norte.

Brah (1996, p. 193) notes that while it is possible for diasporans "to feel at home in a place ... the experience of social exclusions may inhibit public proclamations of the place as home".

### Summary and conclusion

The chapter showed that the Filipino existence in New Zealand entailed a process of uprooting and regrounding (Ahmed, Castañeda, Fortier and Sheller 2003) or homing (Brah) through different phases over time. Werbner (2002, 11) argues that “diasporic communities engage in constant practical ideological work of marking boundaries ...while at the same time ... re-inscribe collective memories ... in their public ceremonials or cultural works.” The New Zealand brides appropriated the local New Zealand barbie and made it their own by preparing the traditional *fiesta* food or *handa*, earning a brief acknowledgement of such uniqueness in the New Zealand TV documentary citation of a “barbeque Filipino style” and transforming the nature of the home as a place. Marshall (2002, p. 360) points out:

The role of rituals in the creation of belonging is suggested by the fact that social integration and a sense of unity are among the most noted outcomes and functions of ritual and the ethological evidence that the use of rituals is a means of social bonding common to many social species.

Brah (1996, p. 208) argues that “diaspora space” is where “tradition is continually invented” which makes it a site for hybrid cultural practices such as the Filipino barbie.

As their numbers grew when skilled migrants came, Filipino gatherings not only moved from the private spaces of Filipino homes to the public spaces of

New Zealand multicultural community gatherings, but they also claimed a distinct place and identity within the Catholic Church. Filipino popular religious devotions were started, and the religious character of the *fiesta* was finally expressed within the Church.

Class hierarchy among Filipinos is historical and exists among migrant Filipinos in New Zealand. There are accounts of ‘othering’ and discrimination in the migrant narratives. Some intra-diaspora contestations are based subtly on class. Other forms of othering were deemed ‘racial’ by some migrants, with two undertones, subtly from *Pakeha* workmates and publicly from young *Pakehas*.

Among Filipinos in New Zealand, folk religiosity’s notion of destiny (*kapalaran*), luck (*swerte*), *bahala na* (God will take care), and reciprocity in terms of ‘debt of gratitude’ (*utang na loob*) and vow (*panata*) mix with the migration process and settlement. Thus, migration and the search for a better life are given a transcendent, cosmic meaning by Filipino cultural value orientations and folk Christian beliefs.

The majority of the migrant interlocutors mentioned/implied divine assistance and guidance in their migration process. The sacred realm is also seen as



consisting of a community. God has friends and allies -- the saints and angels - - assisting God's work of dispensing help and favours. For Catholics, God and the sacred community are made symbolically present through sacred icons present in various shrines and churches. Supplications and petitions therefore occur in appointed and recognised sacralised spaces, where the connection between the mortal (human beings) and the immortal (sacred) is mediated.<sup>200</sup>

Social alliances among Filipinos are generally based on the family, kinship, regional language and class. The cultural notions of *tayo* in contrast with *sila* (us-insider; them-outsiders) and *kampi* (to take side with family or friends) reveal deeply seated distrust of other Filipinos who belong to other families, regions or groups. Strong feelings of small group loyalties permeate intra-diaspora interactions. Noting conflictual relationships among Filipinos, even those belonging to the same home locality, Zialcita (2005, p. 49), a Filipino anthropologist, argues against the idealisation of a more communal pre-colonial Philippines because “the community-beyond-the-kin” among Filipinos “did not exist from the beginning” and colonisation despite its deleterious effects also contributed to the expansion of the meaning of community beyond the kin:

---

<sup>200</sup> While some Protestant, Evangelical and Pentecostal informants equate sacred icons to idols, they also prayed and petitioned God for jobs and visas.

It seems that 400 years of exposure to Christianity has opened spaces, both physical and spiritual, which enable strangers to meet regularly face-to-face and interact as fellow humans.... Both the procession and the Mass continue to be the rituals where Filipinos extend a hand to people beyond their circle of familiars. At *fiesta* time., families with vows to particular saints open their doors and feed any passing stranger who wish to pray before their household's revered saint (ibid. p.69; 71). (italics mine)

Yet, as Pertierra (1995) notes, even within the ritual that unifies intra-community divisions and contestations occur. As will be shown in the next chapter, Filipinos are able to unite during the *fiesta* religious celebrations but contending alliances do exist and contestations do occur.

Filipino folk Christian and family orientations have significant effects on the migrants' exercise of agency in the process of migration, and participation in the migrant community celebrations and religious rituals in the diaspora. The Filipino diaspora's observance of the *fiesta* displays the Filipino affective relationship to an icon, its connection to the family and reflects its patterning of cultural orientations and values.

It is evident that the Filipino "diasporic home" connects to the historicised experience of colonisation and Christianisation through the practice of folk Christian religious rituals and devotions. This point will be demonstrated

further in the next chapter's ethnographic account of the *Santacruzán* and the *Santo Niño-Sinulog*, the two most popular Filipino *fiestas* in New Zealand.

## Chapter Six

### The *Santacruzán* and *Santo Niño-Sinulog* Fiesta in New Zealand

#### Introduction

*[P]eople came, in tens of thousands during the principal fiesta ... Clearly, too, these throngs came not only for solemnity but also for festivity and trade ... Communion, marketing, the fair, all went together in a place set apart.*

Turner (1973, p. 208)

The wave of secularism hitting Western Europe, some suggest, is also at work in New Zealand (Cooke 2007, p.13; Dakin 2007, p. 52)<sup>201</sup> because “religion seldom appears to occupy a prominent place in the lives of most of its citizens” (Ahdar 2006, p. 619). While there has been a notable decrease in the number of New Zealanders associating themselves with Christianity,<sup>202</sup> an opposite trend is apparent among new migrants,<sup>203</sup> among them, Filipinos. In New Zealand’s two biggest cities of Auckland and Christchurch, a strong trend towards the performance of folk religious and *fiesta* celebrations among Filipinos is demonstrated repeatedly.<sup>204</sup> Indeed, Filipino *fiestas* and popular religious devotional practices have attracted increasing interest, attendance and

---

<sup>201</sup> According to Cooke (2007, p. 13) secularism means “the state, especially in areas of education and health and public policy is independent of religion.”

<sup>202</sup> Those declaring religious affiliation declined from 60.6 per cent in 2001 to 55.6 per cent in 2006, while 34.7 per cent indicating no religion increased by five per cent from 29.6 per cent in 2001 (Statistics New Zealand 2006).

<sup>203</sup> The same report notes a remarkable increase of religious affiliation among newly arrived residents for the same period, for example, Sikhism by 83 %, Hinduism by 61.8 % and Islam by 52.6 % (ibid.). The report thus shows two polarities: the decreasing Christian affiliation among New Zealanders, and increasing religious affiliation and identification among newly arrived migrants and residents.

<sup>204</sup> I followed the *Santo Niño-Sinulog* and the *Santacruzán fiesta* celebrations in Christchurch from 2007-2010 and in Auckland the *Santo Niño-Sinulog* from 2009-2010, and the *Santacruzán* in 2008.

participation in the cities of Wellington,<sup>205</sup> Auckland and Christchurch, and even in smaller towns such as Timaru and Temuka in the South Island.

From the previous chapter's discussion of Filipino migrants' customary and mostly unconscious ritualisation of the homeland *fiesta* ambience in their 'barbies' in their initial attempts at home-making, the discussion now moves to the emotionally intense and formalised performance of the *fiesta* rituals. This chapter advances the thesis's main proposition that religion plays a significant role in Filipino transnational migration and diasporic adaptation by looking at the spiritual resources that provide Filipino migrants guidance and support in their transnational journey and meaning-making in a new home.

Through the ethnographic account of the two most popular and widely observed folk Christian rituals in the diaspora, the *Santacruzán* and *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta* celebrations, the chapter demonstrates the significant role of rituals and symbols in mediating homeland-diaspora connections and makes the argument that *fiesta* ritual performances are migrant venues for : 1) remembrance, socialization and transmission of culture; 2) sacralization of space; 3) emotional energy or spontaneous communitas; 4) separation, and creation of boundaries; and 5) construction of identity and belonging. Thus,

---

<sup>205</sup> I was not able to observe any of the Filipino *fiestas* in Wellington, though their occurrences often appear in the websites of the Philippine embassy and Filipino groups and associations based in Wellington.

this chapter engages the anthropological discourse on ritual, performance and symbolism to demonstrate how anthropological insights on culture, liminality, *communitas*, ritual, and symbols, gained through fieldwork and participant observation of relatively stable and localised pre-literate and pre-industrial peoples, may be relevant to the study of ritual performances of late modern mobile peoples and sites, such as those of the Filipino migrants in New Zealand.

According to Turner (1977 p. 63) “culture has to be seen as processual because it emerges in interaction and imposes meaning on [that with]... which it interacts.” He cites Van Gennep’s (1960, p. 2) theory of life cycle rituals as “a series of passages,” of movements from one phase to another in the profane and sacred worlds. Since there is great “incompatibility” between “the profane and the sacred worlds” one “cannot pass from one to the other without an intermediate state” called the liminal state (ibid.). Societies, according to Turner (1969), have two kinds of human interrelations. In a structured, and differentiated society with a hierarchical system, people are separated “in terms of ‘more’ or ‘less’”, while in an “unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated society,” there is “*comitatus*, community, or even communion of equal individuals ...” (ibid. p. 96). *Communitas* emerges in the liminal state by breaking through “the interstices

of structure in liminality; at the edges of structure in marginality; and from beneath structure in inferiority” (ibid. pp. 96; 128). Thus, *communitas* is a counterpoint to structure. There are three kinds of *communitas*: 1) existential; 2) normative and 3) ideological (Turner 1973, pp. 193-194; 1969a, p. 132; 1969b, p. 132). Existential or spontaneous *communitas* is “the direct, immediate, and total confrontation of human identities which, when it happens, tends to make those experiencing it think of mankind as a homogeneous, unstructured, and free community” (Turner 1973, p. 193), though it does not abolish social and cultural structures but only removes “the sting of their divisiveness” (ibid. p. 221). These concepts are important to the chapter’s discussion of what migrant community rituals achieve. Diasporic communities, as previously mentioned, nurture homeland memories, and experience marginalisation in host societies. The sacred icons which are homeland symbols facilitate an experience of *communitas*. I show in the ethnography that ritual performance provides Filipino migrants with an experience of spontaneous *communitas*, even when divisions and hierarchical relations remain during the overall performance.

One strand in my analysis draws on Turner’s (1969) analysis of ritual performance and dominant symbol properties to frame my own analysis and understanding of Filipino rituals in New Zealand and Singapore. Ritual

performances, according to Turner (1969, p. 20) are “distinct phases in the social processes whereby groups became adjusted to internal changes and adapted to their external environment.” In ritual performance, the ritual symbol is associated with the community’s “interests, purposes, ends, and means” (ibid.). Furthermore, “meaning is assigned ... nonverbally through ritual ... and is often stored in symbols which become indexical counters in subsequent situational contexts” (Turner 1977b, p. 63). Since symbols are “involved in social process,” they have to be studied in a time series in connection with other events (Turner 1969, p. 20). Ritual in this sense demonstrates meaning-making processes. The chapter makes the point that as migrants deal with internal and external changes brought about by transnational movement, rituals and symbols not only provide them with spiritual resources that offer stability and support in the transnational journey, but also effect changes in their reinterpretation and innovation of rituals in a new context. I examine what diasporic rituals and symbols mean, how their meanings are communicated, and how they effect transformation in the community. More important, I examine the process of the Filipino migrants’ construction of community and inscription of identity through ritual performance in a foreign land.



The chapter also draws attention to the role of institutional religion, in this case the Catholic Church. I show that the Church is the most familiar institution for Filipinos overseas, a legacy of colonialism, and is thus predictably the locus of migrant ritual performances. At the same time the *fiestas* are lay initiated and maintained and thus are independent of institutional control even while the Church and state are engaged in the celebrations. The chapter provides a detailed account of Filipino community ritual formations in diaspora. It highlights through the New Zealand case study the chaordic characteristics of predictability and institutional independence displayed by Filipinos wherever they settle (see Werbner 2005).

Aside from its sacred dimension, the chapter shows that the *fiesta* involves diasporic sociality, politics and economics. Moving from the previous chapter's discussion of food commensality among Filipinos in the barbies, I highlight in this chapter the importance of food in the *fiesta* to illustrate the connection between ritualized customary group activities and emotionally heightened ritual events. Hermanowicz and Morgan (1999, p. 198) argue that "rituals draw upon customary group practices to affirm the fundamentals of how groups know and show themselves to insiders and outsiders." I make the argument that the appropriation of *fiesta* as a symbol of 'native' performance and food commensality among migrant groups in New Zealand

have aided and facilitated the conservation, and preservation of imagined “Filipino” or “Pinoy” identity and play a prominent role in Filipino cultural reproduction and transmission overseas.

But beyond the presentation and analysis of what happens and what is achieved by migrant symbols and community ritual performance, I argue further that Filipino migrant rituals are essentially religious, and that religion, through folk Christian practices and performance, plays a significant role in the transnational journey and home-making of Filipino migrants in New Zealand.

It must be noted that the chapter does not essentialise the role of folk religiosity and the *fiesta* ritual but it does propose that Filipino migrants exercise their agency and express their identity through the prism of folk religiosity and the *fiesta* memory of home. While no doubt the Filipino diaspora has various non-religious organised activities, such as sports festivals, social and cultural events, all these activities are disparate parts of the *fiesta*, as practised and celebrated by most Philippine towns and villages as shown in Chapter Four (see pp. 181-184).

### **Filipino community gatherings and *fiestas***

At least seven events attract Filipino migrants, either in one assembly or in small group circles in Christchurch: 1) The Philippine Independence Day celebrations in June; 2) Christmas parties; 3) Valentine's day; 4) *Sinulog*; 5) *Santacruzán*; 6) basketball; and 7) boxing. I have mentioned the Philippine Independence Day celebration as an important part of the diaspora's development from a small circle of Filipina brides to the present larger Filipino community. From 2008 to 2010, the Independence Day event was marked by two celebrations. The first celebration, sponsored by the Philippine Society of Canterbury, is usually held in pubs or halls, and has the ambience of a *fiesta* ball or party, while the second celebration is a cultural programme presented by Philippine Culture and Sports. Despite differences in approach, both events showcase the fluid boundaries between the sacred and secular as both include a prayer and the singing of two national anthems (Philippines' and New Zealand's) at the beginning.

In terms of sports, basketball has been a regular weekend activity, no doubt a reflection of basketball's stature as the favourite sport<sup>206</sup> in the Philippines, at the YMCA sports centre in Bishopdale. As in the Independence Day programme, there is a prayer at the beginning and a closing prayer of

---

<sup>206</sup> The professional basketball league is called the PBA (Philippine Basketball Association). The players enjoy public adulation and large paychecks comparable to celebrities and stars (like the All Blacks in New Zealand).

thanksgiving at the end. A couple of teams represent church groups, one of them the *Sinulog* team. This again points to the close connection between religion and the social among Filipinos. Boxing is also a favourite, popularised by Filipino boxing icon Manny Pacquiao, the first boxer (ever) to win eight world titles in eight weight divisions. Pacquiao provides a good example of Filipino folk religiosity: he proudly wears a rosary to the ring, kneels down in his corner to pray before the fight, and consistently makes the sign of the cross before any round. Pacquiao's fights gather small circles of Filipinos in Christchurch<sup>207</sup> with the ambience of the *fiesta-feria*.

From among the various *fiestas* introduced by different regional communities of Filipino migrants in New Zealand, the *Santacruzán* and the *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta* have remained the most popular and well attended. This indicates the regional origins of migrant community formations in the diaspora. As previously stated, the *Santacruzán* originates from Luzon, among the *Tagalogs*, while the *Santo Niño-Sinulog* originates from Cebu. As the archipelago's two largest spoken languages, contestations have always been present between the two. When *Tagalog* was chosen as the national language on 14 July 1936 and renamed *Pilipino* by the Philippine Commonwealth government, there were murmurs of protest and disagreement from other

---

<sup>207</sup> The Philippines virtually comes to a standstill to watch his fights; the crime rate drops to zero and the military and rebel groups declare a few hours' truce.

language groups,<sup>208</sup> especially Cebuanos. At one point in recent history, the Cebu local government removed Filipino as a subject from its school curriculum, but this had a negative effect on the Cebuano students' performance in the Filipino section of the national examinations. In recent power maneuvers in national politics, from 2007 to 2009 a powerful opposition block based in Metro Manila attempted to pressure then President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to resign. Other regions such as Cebu saw Manila as a political bully and resisted what they called the dictates of "Imperial Manila" by supporting the President, thus allowing her to finish her term.

### ***Santacruzán and Flores de Mayo in Christchurch and Auckland***

The month of May is significant for Filipino communities in Auckland and Christchurch. Filipinos in both cities celebrate the *fiesta* ritual of the *Santacruzán* (feast day for finding the true cross of Jesus) and *Flores de Mayo* (Flowers of May), which comes as no surprise considering that they are observed in most Philippine lowland areas. As previously mentioned in chapter four, the *Santacruzán* procession participants are mostly women, playing the roles of biblical and mythical characters (see pp. 192-195). The procession preparation takes almost a year in the Philippines. For most localities, it involves a special committee to find ritual participants to play the

---

<sup>208</sup> This was later changed into *Filipino*, as scholars realised that there are commonly used words that have letters not included in the *Tagalog* alphabet, and also integrated popularly used regional words.

roles of *Reina Elena* or Queen Helena, Emperor Constantine's mother (see pp. 192-195) and her entourage. This is usually done through an annual popularity and beauty contest among young girls, teenagers, matrons, and even gays, depending on the organisers. As a lay organised event, some *Santacruzán* processions are divorced from religious connections as quasi-religious events. For example, the Catholic Church does not allow gays to participate in the parish organized *Santacruzán*, but the Filipino gay communities have habitually subverted church rules by organizing their own *Santacruzán*. Manalansan's (2003) 'Global Divas' describes the Filipino Gay community's *Santacruzán* celebrations in the U.S.

The *Reina Elena* beauty contest is, in the Philippine context, linked to money and sponsorship. The candidates are usually those who have a following in the community in terms of their beauty, influential family, kin and friends willing to donate huge amounts of money for the charitable works of the *fiesta*. The "winner" becomes *Reina Elena* while the runner-ups in the contest play the other characters in the procession. It is believed that a young woman's chances of finding a proper husband, meaning coming from a wealthy and influential family, is increased by the prestige of the contest. It is not unusual to have more than one *Reina Elena* in a single procession as different districts and zones of towns and cities have their own contest winners who join the

procession. The whole town gets involved in the procession as organisers, regulators, supporters and spectators including non-Catholics, government, and civil society groups.

The Auckland Filipino Chaplaincy's tenth anniversary celebration in 2007 chose the *Santacruzán* as the event's main *fiesta* theme. To indicate the scope and prestige of the celebration, the Archbishop of Manila, Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales, was invited to be the main celebrant of the *fiesta* liturgy and the featured guest of the *fiesta's Filipiniana*<sup>209</sup> programme. The Cardinal was allotted a day of pastoral visitation in Christchurch. Different Filipino communities formed a central committee in the South Island. Cultural groups were tasked to present a number for the programme and migrant families were obliged to bring Filipino dishes for the *handá* or feast.

The Cardinal's visit to Auckland for the *Santacruzán fiesta* attracted the attention of New Zealand's mainline media and was featured in the Sunday morning programme *Asia Down Under*, in June 2007. In Christchurch, the Cardinal's visit proved to be unifying. Different groups normally functioning separately came together in a spirit of cooperation indicating the Catholic Church's continuing influence on Filipino life beyond the national borders.

---

<sup>209</sup> Meaning a Filipino cultural show with performances by different migrant groups

The first Christchurch *Santacruzán fiesta* was a resounding success. Almost all Filipino groups threw their support into the *fiesta*, no doubt positively influenced by the unity and goodwill generated by a few months of interactive planning prior to the cardinal's visit. The two major sponsors or the *hermano/hermana* mayores of the 2007 Christchurch *Santacruzán*, were a couple, Sonny and Belen; well-educated, relatively new to Christchurch, members of the CFC (Couples for Christ) and known for being good Catholics. The couple had been active sports organisers and was able to elicit the support of the sports minded. As skilled professionals, they were also financially well-off and had influential *compadrazgo* social and political connections.

The *Santacruzán* ritual started with the recitation of the rosary inside the church for the intentions of the community, led by women, some of whom were known members of the Legion of Mary.<sup>210</sup> After the rosary, the liturgy of mass began. The entrance procession was led by the *Flores de Mayo* children. The children, carrying decorated baskets of flowers, were throwing and spreading flower petals along the church aisle, and were closely followed by the different *Santacruzán* characters with the *Reina Elena*. The altar servers

---

<sup>210</sup> The *Legión Maríae* is a lay association devoted to the veneration of Mary and performs informal ministries for the unmarried couples, un-baptised children, and the sick. The Christchurch LM is led by a Filipina. The LM is also popular among Filipinas in Singapore and Malaysia.



and the two Filipino priests entered last. The mass readers and acolytes or lay ministers of communion belonged to the couple's circle of friends. The ritual itself was generic and resembled other Catholic masses in Christchurch, except for the Filipino choir and a repertoire of Filipino songs (fig. 6.1).



What was remarkable was the presence of the different Filipino groups from the South Island and the enthusiastic participation of Filipino youth, some from mixed marriages (children of the Filipina NZ brides), who clearly enjoyed wearing their costumes. After the mass, the entourage posed for photos in front of the altar, to the delight of family members and friends. There was a lot of teasing and laughter, which according to some was very 'Filipino.'

As it was the last weekend of May, by the time the short procession from the church to the pastoral centre began, darkness and wintry cold had set in (fig. 6.2a, b, c). Despite this, the participants gamely walked the short distance

wearing Filipino costumes obviously meant for the Philippine tropics. The lighted candles could not survive the chilly wind, so they walked in semi-darkness. But friends and relatives provided much encouragement with a lot of teasing banter. The priests skipped the procession, proceeding directly to the hall, making it a purely lay affair.



6.2a: 2007 Assembling for the procession



6.2b: 2007 Procession: *Reina Elena* and Constantino



6.2c: 2007 *Santacruzán* Procession

No beauty contest was held because all the participants came from the couple's family, friends, and friends of family who were, in Filipino terms, *napakiusapan* (convinced or gently cajoled) into participating in the *Santacruzán* procession. A good number of non-Catholics participated in the

procession, including members of the SDA (Seventh Day Adventists). A reasonable fee for the dinner was charged at the door of the hall, to help cover expenses for the affair as well as raise funds for the Filipino Chaplaincy. Before the meal, the Filipino chaplain was requested to bless the *handa* or Filipino food arrayed on a long buffet table. Dinner was followed by a programme mixing traditional Filipino dances with contemporary youth hip hop dances from the hit movie “High school Musical.” The evening concluded with disco dancing.

The movement of the procession was lineal, from the Church to the parish hall for the *fiesta* feasting, from the *fiesta* prayer proper to the *feria*. Notably, the separation of the two parts was done by the change in venue and mediated by the procession. A popular *Tagalog* saying goes, ‘*Pagkatapos ng misa, kasunod ang mesa,*’ meaning, after the mass table, the meal table (a play of words between ‘misa’ – mass, and ‘mesa’ – table, a *Tagalog* semantic humour), implying the movement from the solemnity of prayer to the sociality of feasting. Turner (1967, pp. 28; 30) notes that an important property of dominant ritual symbols is that they encompass *polarization of meaning*, that is, they possess “two distinguishable poles of meaning,” the “ideological pole” and the “sensory pole”:

In the action situation of ritual ... the ritual symbol.. . effects an interchange of qualities between its poles of meaning. Norms and values, on the one hand, become saturated with emotion, while the gross and basic emotions become ennobled with social values. The irksomeness of moral constraint is transformed into the 'love of virtue.'

On another level, the outward direction of the procession from the sacred ideational pole to the social sensory pole reflects fluid boundaries and connection between the two. This shows similarity with Guamanian *fiestas* wherein "praying and eating form dual ends of the armature of ritual symbol" (Crumrine 1982, p. 97). The *Santacruzán's* ritual movement between the sacral ideological and sensory poles is not a single unilineal movement from one to the other. Rather, they merge, part and merge again at given moments, giving the sense that while there are two parts, they are actually whole and inseparable. Boissevain's (1969a, p. 77) account of the *festa* in Malta reveals some similarities:

Processions are as much part of village life as shopping, gossiping and going to church. In the lives of the villagers the religious and the secular are not seen as two opposing poles. The way in which these elements are intermingled in the *festa* itself, as well as in the form and function of religious procession, is an example of the way in which religious and secular strands are woven into the social fabric...

The procession highlights the importance of the Church as the place of ritual performance and movement.

In contrast to the previous year's unity, the 2008 *Santacruzán* in Christchurch was marred by conflict among groups revealing the underlying loyalties and alignments within the diaspora. It began with a seemingly trivial event separate from the *Santacruzán*. In a meeting of the Filipino Chaplaincy committee, a 'recollection'<sup>211</sup> was proposed on the Saturday before Palm Sunday that conflicted with a City Council's multicultural programme in a Christchurch city park. Council events are planned a year ahead, and some of the decades old Filipino groups, led by Filipina brides, had previously committed themselves to participating in the event. The Chaplaincy recollection proposal came from skilled migrants led by Sonny, the 2007 *Santacruzán hermano*. The older group argued that participation in Christchurch multicultural affairs takes precedence since the Chaplaincy recollection was planned later and could be held on another date. But the other side refused to budge, insisting that religious activities take priority over secular ones, especially during the Lenten season. The conflict was aggravated by confrontational e-mails that were leaked to parties beyond the committee. To avoid aggravating the situation, members who had committed to the multicultural event resigned from the Chaplaincy.

---

<sup>211</sup> Recollection is a day of spiritual activity for Catholics. See on-line Catholic encyclopaedia for more information: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12676b.htm>

In general, Filipinos avoid open conflict, preferring what is referred to as SIP or smooth interpersonal relations, which is connected to a social orientation called '*hiya*' literally meaning shame. Hollnsteiner (1970, p. 71-72) explains:

*Hiya* is the universal social sanction that regulates the give and take of reciprocity and ... all social behavior. *Hiya* may be translated as a "sense of social propriety"; as a preventive, it makes for conformity to community norms. When one violates such a norm he ordinarily feels a deep sense of shame ... To call a Filipino *walang hiya*, or "shameless" is to wound him seriously (italics mine).

To be shamed is to lose face (*mukha*) and standing in the community. Thus, when Filipinos are in situations of conflict, each side usually leaves room for the other to make a graceful exit, in order to preserve *mukha*. In the recollection conflict, this was done by resignation. When the much disputed date arrived, the Filipinos were "split" between two events, one religious and the other cultural. Both affairs were well attended as both groups were able to muster enough following in their particular events, thanks mainly to family, kin and friends, but the division and the alliances among Filipinos were revealed. The split in the community deprived the 2008 *Santacruz* of the overwhelming support enjoyed by the previous year's organisers. However, the new 2008 *hermana* and *hermano mayor*, Cherie and her husband Andy<sup>212</sup> are members of a choir and the Philippine Society. Both groups effectively

---

<sup>212</sup> Cherie and Andy are a mixed marriage couple and known in the community as devout Catholics.

came to their aid by taking on the procession characters (fig. 6.3a, b, c), and providing logistical assistance.

The *Santacruzán* 2008 proved to be as good if not slightly better than the previous year. The ritual replicated for the most part the pattern of the previous year, but the programme proved to be better by having a central theme, '*Pista sa Nayon*' (Village *fiesta*), showing *fiesta* in rural Philippines. The story plot included the *harana* or serenade, where a bachelor (played by a *Kiwi* husband), courted the lass of his dreams (played by his Filipina wife), by singing to her a *Tagalog* love song, in a moonlit night. Some lowland dances, such as *Pandanggo sa Ilaw* (dancers balance glasses with candles on the heads and hands), were performed. The event was successful and well attended, but as expected, groups allied with the recollection faction were absent.

Meanwhile, the *Santacruzán* in Auckland was started by Carmen, a businesswoman from Surigao, a province in northern Mindanao. As a rural bank owner in her hometown, Carmen's family was modestly stable. Her interest in New Zealand started when a former business client married a New Zealander. She came to New Zealand to look for possible business options. Being religious, she went to church during her visit and met a Filipino priest. Ever helpful, she volunteered to play the organ for his church masses. Before

long, he convinced her to stay. Instead of founding a business, she decided to apply for a job as a teacher and got accepted. She became an active member of the Filipino Catholic community and helped start the first Filipino *fiesta* of the Immaculate Conception in 1993. Carmen was especially pleased about the *Santacruzán* theme for the 2007 tenth anniversary of the Filipino Chaplaincy.



Carmen started the *Santacruzán* because she wanted the diaspora children to know and understand important Filipino religious traditions as she experienced them growing up in Mindanao,

I have experienced as a young girl to offer flowers (to the Virgin). That was such a beautiful experience that I wanted to bring here. It is better with children... start with the children offering flowers and be aware of the Blessed Mother.<sup>213</sup>

Children are important because “they are the symbol of continuity, the testimony that life will go on ... ritual is a cultural language through which the child learns to symbolize the world and learns how to order life within that

<sup>213</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 6.1



world of meanings” (Neville 1984, pp. 157, 162). In the previous chapter it was shown that migrant parents were concerned about teaching Filipino cultural values to their children (see pp. 239, 253-255). The encouragement of children to participate in rituals is a way of imparting homeland values. There is an obvious effort to pass on tradition and cultural practices to Filipino children growing up in New Zealand. Religious rituals such as the *Santacruzán* become a part of an on-going process of cultural transmission. Diaspora members assume the duty and function of bequeathing cultural legacy through performance.

There were some differences between the two celebrations in terms of time, the process of procession role selection, rosary prayer, the manner the liturgical entrance was done and the language used in the mass. The Auckland *Santacruzán* procession took place in mid-morning before the noon-time mass. Little children of pre-kindergarten and kindergarten ages were the main role players in the procession that were chosen following the ‘beauty contest tradition’ of the homeland. The *Reina Elena* beauty contest winner was a bubbly five-year old girl who according to information from well-meaning attendees had well-off grandparents who donated a remarkable sum to the event’s charitable cause, so that their favourite grandchild may win the coveted role. Since there was a parish wide drive to support participants to the

World Youth Day (a worldwide Catholic youth gathering started by the charismatic Pope John Paul II in 1986) in Sydney, Australia that year, the funds raised by the beauty contest (around five thousand NZ dollars \$ 5000) was donated to the parish youth.

As in the Christchurch *Santacruz* a significant number of the participants wore traditional Filipino costumes, *barong* for the boys and *terno*<sup>214</sup> for the girls. The rosary was prayed as the procession moved, with Marian hymns sung in-between the mysteries by a small choir accompanied by guitar following the Blessed Virgin Mary's icon of the Immaculate Conception.<sup>215</sup> The Auckland procession resembled the pageantry in most Philippine localities that claims public space as the venue of performance. The procession ventured across the street fronting the parish rectory, and circled the parish school compound before entering the church. The mass began with the *Flores de Mayo* participants leading the procession to the altar, but instead of spreading flower petals in the aisle, the children offered their flowers to Mary's icon, arranging them at her feet. Like all Filipino Chaplaincy masses, a Filipino choir sung at the mass. In contrast to Christchurch, the mass proper in Auckland was in Filipino, reflecting the demographic differences of leadership

---

<sup>214</sup> The *terno* is the 'official' Philippine costume for women.

<sup>215</sup> Marian hymns are hymns dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, like Immaculate Mother, Hail Mary, etc. The rosary is a popular Catholic form of prayer done meditatively with the use of rosary beads divided into five sections of ten beads each called "decades." The three main "Mysteries" recited at different times of the week are: Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious.

between the two communities: Auckland community leaders mostly come from the ranks of skilled and professional migrant couples whose numbers are on the rise while community leaders in Christchurch are New Zealand brides<sup>216</sup> who have become the minority. The chaplain gave a special blessing for the children, and as expected, after the mass, group photos were taken. Afterwards, a buffet lunch was offered by the parents, family and friends of the participants, and the sponsoring organisers. For those who did not wish to join the *fiesta* lunch, but wanted to eat Filipino food, there were *feria* stalls selling Filipino food in another part of the church compound. Some informants mentioned that non-Catholic Filipinos come to the Chaplaincy masses not just because of their Catholic friends, but also because of the Filipino food being sold in the stalls which explains the inter-religious mix in the community. Thus, as in the Philippine setting, the *fiesta-feria* brings Catholics and non-Catholics together, promoting community interactions and unity. Arguably, the *Santacruzán* is said to be the ‘mother of all *fiestas*’, but this may only be due to the more frequent reference to the *Santacruzán* in Luzon and the *Tagalog* regions found in extant Philippine literature in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta*, which traces its origins to 1521, is after all the first *fiesta* in the Philippine islands. Thus the choice of the *Santacruzán* in the

---

<sup>216</sup> English is used in Christchurch in deference to the Filipina brides’ Kiwi husbands and their children who neither understand nor speak Filipino.

Chaplaincy celebrations hints at its status as the *primo inter pares* among Filipino religious rituals in New Zealand which indicates the pre-eminence of the national identity over regional identities in diasporic gatherings, and willingness to put aside regional identities to rally unity in the diaspora. Werbner (1995, p. 330) notes that “theosophy, missionary activity, and the revitalizing of religious organization are all tied to the high value placed on movement and the sacralization of ... profane space.” In the earlier foregrounding discussion of the *fiesta* ritual I have mentioned that ritual is both self-referential (Rappaport 1999; Turner 1986) and transformative (Turner 1977, 1969). The *Santacruzán* procession in both Christchurch and Auckland not only transforms secular space into sacred space, but also encapsulates the homeland’s history for diasporic re-telling.

Turner (1977, p. 61) points out that the objective and subjective aspects of ritual model the “hierarchical framework of relations” based on “transcendental common ground” are of the “same fundamental structural and dynamic principles as society itself.” The *Santacruzán* ritual performance in the Philippines, as previously pointed out (see pp.192-195), reflects Filipino cosmology and idealised values. When performed in a foreign land, homeland rituals such as the *Santacruzán* goes through a process of ‘naturalisation’ (Werbner 1990) providing the diaspora with a distinct identity marker, while

also merging with the general structure and system of the hosting local church. In effect, ritual opens a channel for migrant interaction with host societies or communities, in this case, New Zealanders, leading to mutual understanding and accommodation. This does not mean however that identity boundaries or distinctions disappear. Ethnic or group distinctions are not dependent “on an absence of social interaction and acceptance, but are quite to the contrary often the very foundations on which embracing social systems are built” (Barth 1969, p. 10). Hermanowicz and Morgan (1999, pp. 198-200) argue that:

[I]dentity often is constructed through a series of ritual practices: special performances call attention to group attributes and to the sacred essence of the group itself... [G]roups use rituals to define for themselves and their observers what they believe is valuable and right. In doing so, they promote and protect a collective self-image.

Johnny, a skilled migrant, sums it up, “Hopefully, they will see that even if we are ‘different’ we are kind, helpful and also have respect for them.”<sup>217</sup> Migrants set themselves as socially and culturally distinct which paradoxically helps them put down roots (Werbner 2005b, p. 746; see also Tölölyan 2007, p. 650).

### ***Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta in Christchurch: the icon and the bride***

Arguably, the most attended religious event in New Zealand is the *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta*. The *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta* in Christchurch begins with a

---

<sup>217</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 6.2

novena *panata* petition and a bride's story of migration. Magda had various pen pals overseas, and one of them, a New Zealander, showed more persistence. He combined writing with frequent overseas calls, and eventually expressed serious marital intentions. Magda, however, could not make up her mind, so she sought "divine guidance" and asked for a 'sign':

I prayed, I have to settle down now, I don't know which one... but ... if I go to this person, I think this is alright.... Just give me a sign.... The sign would be if I'm given a visa, because at that time, it was very strict ... It's not very easy ... to come .... So you need prayers as well. Actually, I said to the *Santo Niño*, if I get married to this man, and given a visa, when we celebrate five years ... I will do it in January, as a thanksgiving for *Santo Niño* for giving me Bruce in my life... and I'll introduce the *Sinulog*. (original in English)

Things went well for her New Zealand visa application, as well as her process of settling down. She even landed a job without a problem. She counted them all as the *Santo Niño*'s blessings. Given Magda's faith<sup>218</sup> and the uncertainty of her fate in a foreign land, it was not surprising that she found a space in her luggage for her favourite sacred icon, the *Santo Niño*, when she left as a bride. In 2003, keeping her vow/*panaad*, on her fifth wedding anniversary, together with some close friends, Magda danced the *Sinulog* in the first *Santo Niño* *fiesta* celebration in Christchurch that she organised. Thus the *Santo Niño*-*Sinulog* *fiesta* in Christchurch was woven into a bride's transnational journey and marriage.

---

<sup>218</sup> Faith here implies Magda's dutiful performance of religious functions including her devotional attachment to the *Santo Niño*.



The *Sinulog* dance as performed and observed in Christchurch combined sensuality and worship. The body movement of the dancers while indicating worship and blessing were clothed with colourfully designed ‘native’ costumes<sup>219</sup> (fig. 6.4a, b, c *Sinulog fiesta* dances, 2007, 2008 and 2009). The main dancer held the sacred icon during the dance and in this sense the body and its movement, and the space where the dance was performed, were all made ‘sacred’.

---

<sup>219</sup> Pigafetta and other Spanish explorers considered Cebu’s women as scantily clad and a little immodest.

Magda recalled that when some Filipinas heard about the *Sinulog* dance, they wanted it performed in a Philippine Society programme in Christchurch.

They asked me, can we not dance it (*Sinulog*) at the programme of the Philippine Society? I said, I really have a plan, but not through the Philippine Society (programme) because *Sinulog* is a ritual dance.... It's like a vow to the *Santo Niño*. I am not used to making it into a mere part of a program. So I talked to this person to make it a festivity like the way we do in the Philippines where we have the *fiesta* in every place/corner of the country.<sup>220</sup>

For Magda, *Sinulog's* sacred dimension gave it pre-eminence over other Filipino cultural dances, and its rightful place was in the religious sphere. For her the *Sinulog* was more than a cultural performance; it was a dance performed as a vow (*panaad*) and prayer to the *Santo Niño* by those who believe.

Magda's initial efforts to organise the *Sinulog* was initially supported by just her family and friends. But eventually it generated some interest among other Filipinos, especially parents with growing children. For them, the *Sinulog* not only teaches their children about Filipino culture, it also communicates the Filipino religious faith and devotion. Like the *Santacruzán*, the *Sinulog* dance is also a venue for cultural transmission. While the *Sinulog* in Christchurch came initially from Magda's religiosity and able leadership, its successful celebration year after year was due to the support of the Filipino community

---

<sup>220</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 6.3



(especially Filipino parents) who, like her, considered religious faith as an important dimension of Filipino identity that needs to be preserved in a foreign land. Thus, teaching the children to dance the *Sinulog* became a tool for instilling Filipino cultural values and identity, in remembrance of the homeland as a mark of distinction among other cultural groups in a new land.

The celebration of the *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta* in Christchurch has two connected parts. The first part is the *fiesta* programme,<sup>221</sup> and is held on the eve of the *fiesta* (or *bisperas* in Filipino).<sup>222</sup> The 2007 programme was held in a club, while the 2008, 2009 and 2010 programmes were held in a horticultural community centre. The programme consists of different Filipino cultural numbers presented by the various Filipino groups in Christchurch and surrounding areas. The emphasis during the vespers is on entertainment. People are free to bring food and drinks because, after the programme, people can stay on for dancing and socials. The *bisperas* programme is fashioned after the *feria* or the “secular” entertainment part of the hometown *fiesta*. However, there are no observable strict dividing boundaries between the secular and the sacred in the Christchurch *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta* celebrations. The performance of the *Sinulog* dance with the *Santo Niño*

---

<sup>221</sup> The *fiesta* programme is separate from the religious ritual and is designed for entertainment.

<sup>222</sup> The *Santo Niño-Sinulog Fiesta* in the Philippines is celebrated on the third Sunday of January. However, the Christchurch *fiesta* was held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of January 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010.

‘blesses’ the club hall, before the social dancing that follows. Similarly, the celebration of the *fiesta* proper in the church features not only food and drinks, but also social dancing (including sensual Latin dances such as the cha-cha and tango), but only after the hall had been made ‘sacred’ by the *Sinulog* dance.

The 2008 *Sinulog* programme started with a prayer recited by the Filipino Chaplain. Then the Filipino national anthem was sung, followed by the New Zealand national anthem. Within the first ten minutes from the start of the programme, reminders of religious, national and diasporic identities had been provided. Filipino religiosity was affirmed, the homeland remembered and the new identity in New Zealand emphasised. This became evident at the very end of the programme when the *Sinulog* ritual dance, traceable as I have argued in Chapter Four (see pp. 198, 202) to the very beginning of Christian Catholicism in Cebu, and the Philippines, was enthusiastically performed by a new generation of Filipinos in New Zealand. As previously mentioned, dances have been linked to religious rituals, feasting, ethnic identity and folklore (see pp. 196-202). The salsa as a distinct music and dance developed among the Caribbean diasporas and became part of the Black-Latino identity (Rivera 2007). Dance thus links history with the contemporary diaspora context.

Rituals effect transformation (see pp. 209-210), in this particular case, the sacralisation of a secular space.

The main dancer held the sacred icon of the *Santo Niño* and circled around the hall waving it sideways back and forth rhythmically as she re-created and re-interpreted Queen Juana's dance of thanksgiving after her Christian baptism, in a new space. The diasporic dance, drawing from the sacred power of the *Santo Niño* sacred icon and following the ancient dance steps that have been performed many times before by generations of pilgrim devotees in the homeland, sacralized the *fiesta* space in Christchurch, New Zealand.

The mix and match between homeland and New Zealand within the dance was obvious. Young girls in indigenous costumes, some obviously from mixed parentage, came out in fetching formations into the hall. When I expressed appreciation for the costumes, a parent sitting beside remarked, "Of course they are beautiful. They came from the Philippines." The costumes linked the diaphora to the homeland not just as a memory, as the material was brought from the Philippines, and the costumes sewn in New Zealand. The costume may be seen as materially embodying diasporic Filipinos' distinct identity. The material itself connects the place of migration metonymically with the homeland, and refers to its history, tradition and religion. But as these are

assembled in a new place, it “announces” (Hermanowicz and Morgan 1999, p. 198) the Filipinos’ public presence as a distinct community. Werbner (2005b, p. 749) observes that transnational migrants “transplant and naturalise cultural categories” in a new country not just to observe tradition and culture, but also because culture “confers them agency within a field of power relations.”



6.5a: 2007 *Handa* Table



6.5b: Philippine street *Fiesta* bunting decoration

The *fiesta* proper happens on the feast day itself. The 2007 *fiesta* celebration started with an English mass presided over by a *Pakeha* priest in honour of the *Santo Niño*. A Filipino choir sang the liturgical hymns. Migrants placed images of the *Santo Niño* at the front of the altar. During his homily, the priest explained the significance of the *Santo Niño fiesta* to the Filipinos to the mostly *Pakeha* congregation. After the mass, the *Santo Niño* images were taken to the parish hall next to the Church decorated with a number of

colourful buntings (fig. 6.5a) similar to those hung in the streets of a Filipino town during *fiestas* (fig. 6.5b).



A long banquet table was laid out at the front beneath the stage filled with the *fiesta handa* or food. All visitors were welcomed and asked to take their seats while waiting for the *lechon* or roasted whole pig, a traditional *fiesta* food. The *lechon* in a Filipino *fiesta* is a symbol of abundance because it is expensive and out of the reach of ordinary Filipino families. As previously mentioned, the *handa* is for everyone who comes, including strangers. Even if the poorer neighbours cannot afford the *lechon*, they can still eat the *lechon* from the table of their affluent neighbours, friends or relatives. Finally, the *lechon* arrived and brought some excitement to the waiting crowd. It was laid out at the centre of the banquet table (fig. 6.6). The Filipino priest was asked to bless the food before the visitors were invited to queue for their turn at the *handa* table. Since the majority of Filipino migrants in Christchurch are Cebuano

speaking, the predominant conversational language in the hall was Cebuano. The *Sinulog fiesta* with the festive ambience of homeland food or *handa* provides a space for fellowship in a similar manner to that of the barbies in the 1980s which provided such venue for interaction for the Filipina brides. The dancing of the *Sinulog* concluded the *fiesta* celebration. Here, the dance ritual previously performed in the secular space of a social pub was repeated, this time in a sacred space. The performance of the dance in two distinct spaces emphasises once more the fluid boundaries between the sacred and secular and the unity between the two in the Filipino *fiesta*. Immediately after the *Sinulog* dance, social dancing followed with some couples taking to the floor to the beat of the cha-cha, bimbo, tango and disco music. Again, the fluidity of transition from a 'sacred' action (*Sinulog*) to the secular (disco dancing) is notable (fig. 6.7).

6.7: *Santo Niño Sinulog Fiesta 2007*  
Disco-dancing after the ritual



I suggest on account of the the *Sinulog* dance, that rituals are able to blur differentiations and connect the symbol's "ideological" and "sensory poles" (Turner 1969) in an authoritative way. In a similar manner that the prayer and feasting of the *Santacruzán* are linked by the procession and made whole, the two separate occasions are made one by the *Sinulog* dance. The ritual dance with the *Santo Niño* icon, which represents and embodies reciprocal relations between the human and the sacred as these are continually celebrated and renewed by a community of believers, mediates, to borrow from Van Gennep (1960), between sacred and profane spaces.

### ***Santo Niño-Sinulog Fiesta in Auckland***

The devotion to the *Santo Niño* and the performance of the *Sinulog* dance ritual in Auckland began with a Filipino family's transnational journey to New Zealand. Amanda, Gerard and their children left Cebu in the late 1980s with one precious piece of hand carried luggage, the *Santo Niño* icon, a family heirloom acquired at the beginning of their marriage. Upon arrival in New Zealand, they tried to look for other devotees of the *Santo Niño*. Amanda recalls:

When we came here, because we were ardent devotees of the *Señor Santo Niño*, we had a hunger to carry on with the devotions, not just as a family. Our desire was to promote the devotion... for all the blessings that we received. We have faith that devotions are really working... (original in English)

They found one Filipina devotee who had already started the novena in her home. With her help, they were able to gather a few devotees and started the Friday novenas in their home.<sup>223</sup> Later, they rotated the novena prayers and the *Santo Niño* icon around willing Filipino homes every week for the whole year, where hosting families invite their neighbours and friends for the novena.

Amanda cited two events that showed the *Santo Niño*'s blessings in their New Zealand life. As new migrants, they had to start all over. The first step was finding a job. She applied to a very prestigious company, with five hundred other job applicants. Two hundred were shortlisted, and later narrowed down to five. Compared to all the others, she was a newcomer, and lacked a visa on her own as she came on account of her husband's working visa, an issue pointed out by NZ immigration officials to the company. The family prayed hard to the *Santo Niño*. The company affirmed its initial decision to hire her. To make things even better, the job came with some additional perks: free accommodation for the whole family and a service car.

The second event came some time later when Amanda was diagnosed with a brain cyst and underwent major surgery. The doctors warned her and Gerard that 99.9 percent of the cases of such surgery have possible side effects on the

---

<sup>223</sup> The Filipina was already terminally ill, but she helped them start the Friday novena at her home, and set the devotion for home visitations before she died.



patient's face (some get deformed), as well as a loss of balance. The whole family made a nine-day novena to the *Santo Niño* for her complete healing. Amanda woke up just three hours after the operation, very lucid, able to get up and eat. She later made a complete recovery without any of the side effects the doctors warned them about. The stable job and the complete recovery from a serious operation affirmed their belief in the efficacy of the novena and the *Santo Niño*'s power to heal.

In 1994, gaining enough organisation and support, they celebrated the first *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta* in Auckland. Starting with only about four hundred devotees, each year saw an increase in the number of participants. In 2008, 2009 and 2010 the *fiesta* attracted a crowd of more than seven thousand. In addition, because of the large number of families wanting to host the novenas, there are now two *Santo Niño* icons 'visiting' Filipino homes in the city, which has been divided into two zones.

Initially, the trajectory of the *Santo Niño*'s movement among Auckland Filipinos was familial and private, located and bounded within the space of migrant homes. The icon moved from house to house, for a week's stay with each Filipino family. Circles of friends and neighbours find time to gather for the Friday novena prayers. Cannel's (1999) observation that sacred icon

rotation “creates and maintains kinship” among Bicolano families (see p. 172) finds an equivalence in the *Santo Niño*’s weekly visitation among Filipino migrant homes in Auckland.

During these visits, the icon becomes the centre point of prayer and adoration in the family’s Friday novena. More importantly, the host family receives the *Santo Niño* as a highly honoured guest and a revered family member, its sacred presence noted in familial conversations and interactions. Sacral presence in the Filipino home is intentional and purposive, to invite blessings and luck (*biyaya* and *swerte*) and ward off evil and misfortune (*masamang palad/malas*). Blessing and protection only come with sincere prayers. Hence, prayers and popular devotions are believed to be efficacious.

### **Nine-day Novena Masses before the *fiesta***

The *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta* has two distinguishing parts, the nine-day novena prayers and masses offered before the *fiesta* and the *fiesta* day celebration itself. From the privacy of people’s homes, the *Santo Niño* eventually emerged, in 1994, to take its place among other distinguished sacred icons in the Catholic Church. From then on, during the observance of the *fiesta* nine-day novena prayers and masses, the *Santo Niño* has taken the centre stage in an altar tableau prepared for the novena for public viewing.



In the 2009 celebration, the *Santo Niño* was placed beneath a life-sized image of his mother Mary (fig. 6.8), the scene inadvertently denoting powerful reminders of the Filipino home, where the child, under the tutelage of the mother, shows respect and humility.<sup>224</sup> Clearly, by aesthetic arrangement in the altar, Mary and the *Santo Niño* are the dominant symbols in the nine-day *fiesta* novena ritual. Even when the novena prayers were offered for *the Santo Niño*, Mary's important role is felt. Before the *fiesta* novena masses, the rosary (a Marian prayer) is recited. Each decade is prayed for various intentions of the community. This actually makes sense in terms of Filipino culture, because

<sup>224</sup> Disrespect, which pertains not just to behaviour but tone of voice in addressing or reasoning out to one's parents, is ordinarily frowned upon.

in the home, all requests are routed through the mother. The liturgical prayers in the mass refer to God as father. In the domestic space of the Filipino home, the mother is in charge, not the father. As previously mentioned the Filipino family is matrifocal (see pp. 189, 206-207). Therefore, logically, Filipinos make the petitions before the mass through Mary the mother.

I have previously mentioned the dominant symbol's ideological pole and sensory pole (Turner 1967) in terms of the *Santacruz* and the *Sinulog* dance in Christchurch. In the Auckland novena the sacred icons' property of condensation or polysemic representations (ibid. p. 28) becomes apparent. Turner (1967, p. 20) makes the observation that symbols may not be analyzed "without studying them in a time series in relation to other events." The "positional meaning of a symbol derives from its relationship to other symbols in totality... whose elements acquire their significance from the system as a whole" (ibid. p. 51). It is helpful to consider the significance of the 'semantic domain' in accompanying and giving cultural symbols meaningful distinctions (Turner 1975, p. 147; 155; 156). I would like to highlight once again the importance of family to Filipinos, which happens to be matrifocal, and suggest the connection between Filipino home-related semantic expressions and the symbolic representation in the tableau.

Filipinos call Mary *Mahal na Ina* which means ‘Beloved Mother’ because the *Ina* or mother, traditionally, is the symbol of love in the home. The *Ina* loves unconditionally, and sacrifices herself for her family. Thus, the concept of *utang na loob*, or debt of gratitude while applicable to both parents, has even more weight in terms of the mother<sup>225</sup> for risking her life in childbirth (Hollnsteiner 1970, p. 72; Rafael 2001, p. 128). The *Ina* in the Filipino home as previously mentioned, is also metaphorically referred to as *ilaw ng tahanan* or light of the home, while *anak* or child is referred to as *biyaya ng Diyos* or God’s blessing (Jocano 1969, p.16). In this sense, the family without a mother is one that lives in darkness, while a child’s presence in the home manifests blessings. This is why in most Filipino homes and business establishments the *Santo Niño* is a popular icon. As the child brings blessings to the home, so will the *Santo Niño* bring blessings and good luck to home and business.<sup>226</sup> The arrangements in the altar tableau of the *Santo Niño* novena visually appropriates Mary -- mother, and *Santo Niño* -- child, as symbolic representations of light and blessing. In this sense, Filipino expressions pertaining to home symbols resonate with the iconic tableau of the *Santo Niño* and the Blessed Virgin Mary in the novena.

---

<sup>225</sup> The Lukan gospel’s Jewish imagery of the father in the narrative of the “Prodigal son” translates into the unconditional love of the mother in Philippine cultural tradition.

<sup>226</sup> The *Santo Niño* is usually displayed in Filipino restaurants, grocery stores, and even taxis to bring “*swerte* and *buenas*” or good luck.

The Catholic Church also appropriates for itself the symbolic representation of a mother. Liturgical prayers refer to the “Holy Mother Church” to symbolise the universal church as the home for all Catholic Christians. The presence of sacred icons in the Filipino home stands as a perpetual reminder of sacred presence in the home and the sacredness of the Christian family. The smallest structure of the church is not the parish, but the family or home. In this sense, the church is the “universal home” while people’s homes are small “churches.”



6.9: 2009 Candle offerings for special intentions

The novena ritual began with the recitation of the rosary wherein the community’s petitions are mentioned. The masses were sponsored by various Filipino communities in Auckland. Various choirs belonging to the different communities sponsoring the event took care of the liturgical singing. The mass was in Filipino (including the readings), and the songs were in Filipino and Cebuano. The masses followed the standard liturgical rubric of Catholic masses with two ‘innovations.’ First, after the priest’s homily in the novena

masses, the participating crowd was invited to light a candle while praying for their special intentions, which are placed at the two sides of the altar (fig. 6.9).



6.10: Novena Masses *Patapak* ritual

The second was the incorporation of the *patapak* ritual in the novena masses for healing. Two priests stand holding the *Santo Niño* icons at the steps of the altar while everyone in the church approach them for the customary blessing of the *patapak* which was previously described (see p. 179-180) in Jocano's (1981) account of a popular practice in the *Ati-atihan* fiesta wherein the devotee's head is touched by the 'feet' of the icon (fig. 6.10). This indicates that the diaspora's *Sinulog* ritual integrates the *patapak* ritual practice of the *Ati-atihan* from Kalibo, Aklan, and is thus, a hybridized ritual. This is not unique among diasporas. The Caribbean black diaspora, made up of slaves

with different cultural practices in Africa, developed a unique hybrid culture (Rivera 2007).

At the end of each novena mass, the *Sinulog* music was played. At such times, people begin to move towards the icons of Mary and the *Santo Niño*, dancing and swaying following the rhythm of the song. Ness (1995) in her ethnography of the *Sinulog* dance in Cebu notes that the sacred icon was the visual reference of the dancers' direction. Some took out white handkerchiefs and waved them sideways above their heads in swinging motion. The enthusiasm of the dancing crowd was contagious. Durkheim (1915, p. 226, 362) once gave an apt description of a similar moment, "collective effervescence." I have mentioned Turner's (1973, p. 220) concept of *communitas* as a liminal experience of solidarity and shared identity and a time wherein cleavages and diversities are set aside or put on hold. Spontaneous *communitas* is certainly a good description for this enthused state. However, in contrast with Turner's (1973) observation of delineation of cleavages among pilgrims in Mexico,<sup>227</sup> hierarchical distinctions among Filipino participants in the ritual remain implicit, and even highlighted as will be shown in the main *fiesta* ritual, even when ritual *communitas* is achieved.

---

<sup>227</sup> Sallnow (1981, p. 164) questions the applicability of *communitas* among other pilgrims and argues that "the concept of *communitas* is dispensable for an understanding of the phenomenon, and that in fact it tends to inhibit an appreciation of the contradictions and emergent processes in Andean regional devotions."



### ***Fiesta Day liturgy ritual***

Iconic representation locates sacral presence in the midst of the Christian community visually and materially. In Auckland the *fiesta* day liturgical ritual began with the procession of the sacred icons of the *Santo Niño* (fig. 6.11a) and the Blessed Virgin Mary (fig. 6.11b). As in the *Santacruzán*, during the procession devotees interspersed praying the decades of the rosary with Marian songs. Some wore different Filipino costumes, a fashion statement reflecting current interpretation of ‘native’ and Hispanic clothing, indicating the diaspora’s remembrance of colonial history (fig. 6.12).



When the procession neared the end, the hymn switched to loud chants of “*Viva Pit Señor*”<sup>228</sup> interspersed with the *Sinulog* dance music. This is similar to observations made in Hawaii and Tonga where religious dances are integrated with chanting mythic narratives (Kaepler 1972; Kurath 1960).

<sup>228</sup> *Viva* is a Spanish expression for life, and used for praise and joyful approval during *fiestas*, while *Pit* is derived from a Cebuano word *Sampit*, which is an expression of respect to a king that is equivalent to ‘hail’.

6.12: Liturgical entrance



6.13a: Fiesta Day Liturgical Dance



6.13b: Fiesta Day Liturgical Dance

As the images of the *Santo Niño* and Blessed Virgin Mary assumed their respective places in front of the altar, liturgy participants wearing traditional native costumes took the centre and side aisles forming multi-level parallel lines around the assembled congregation. When the drums started beating and the *Sinulog* music played to start the liturgy, they led in the dancing (fig. 6.13a, b). The congregation's response was varied. Some following their lead

danced joyfully, others (perhaps the more shy ones) clapped their hands to the rhythm of the beat, while the few remaining took photos. Undoubtedly, all were engaged in the unfolding sacred drama.

Throughout the entrance procession led by *Sinulog* dancers accompanied by the bouncy music and the beat of percussion instruments, the energy in the hall was palpable. Crowd participation in the refrain “*Viva Pit Señor*” was passionate and resounding. While the novena masses exuded great enthusiasm, the *Sinulog* dance performance during the *fiesta* itself was even more engaging, creating a vibrant space filled with rhythmically moving bodies unifying and transforming the disparate congregation into one “body,” one performance and one movement. Kurath (1960, p. 236, citing Mansfield 1952), notes that dance is the “most satisfying expression of ... religious feeling.” Kaeppler (1967) a dance anthropologist, views dance as a structured movement in relation to ritual. The ritual’s inclusion of music, percussion, colourful costumes and graceful dance movements contributed to its sensory appeal and effectiveness. According to Turner (1974, p. 238) “‘society’, as we all experience it, is a process involving both social structure and *communitas*, separately and united in varying proportions.” The community’s dance participation in the entrance procession again reflected *communitas*’ qualities of spontaneity and self-generation (Turner 1974, p. 243).

The liturgical entourage of readers, communion ministers and altar boys and girls and clergy slowly made their way in a procession to the altar on the centre stage of the hall. The Filipino priests joined the movement of the crowd as they danced their way to the altar. When the presider and the entourage finished assembling at the altar facing the congregation, and the music, drums and the dance finally stopped, the silence that followed was poignant, the suspension of the energy concrete.

6.14: *Santo Niño-Sinulog Fiesta 2009: Consecration*



At specifically designated times of the liturgy, “Filipino” cultural signs and symbols appeared. A bamboo (the bamboo is part of the folk/indigenous account of creation, see p. 187) platform containing the Sacred Scriptures was hoisted on to the shoulders of men wearing the traditional *Barong* and received by young girls for the proclamation of the Word (readings from Scriptures). The homily was given by the main celebrant of the mass, a *Pakeha*

Monsignor<sup>229</sup> who happened to be the first New Zealander to preside over the *fiesta* liturgy. Judging from the homily, he was very impressed by the crowd's enthusiasm, number, and the colourful costumes.

6.15: 2009 Singing the thanksgiving hymn in Cebuano



After the homily and intercessory prayers, women and men in costumes, some carrying clay pots of incense, danced the offertory procession.<sup>230</sup> During the consecration,<sup>231</sup> the women raised the clay pots of smoking incense (fig. 6.14) symbolising the recognition and offering of Christ's presence in the material form of bread and wine as the ultimate sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins and salvation of humanity. The mass was in English in deference to the "Kiwi" main celebrant and other important non-Filipino guests, but the majority of the songs were in Filipino and Cebuano.

<sup>229</sup> The celebrant holds an important office in the diocese. Monsignor is a title bestowed by the highest ecclesiastical authority, either in conjunction with an office or merely titular.

<sup>230</sup> The part of the liturgy where the wine and bread are taken as offerings to the altar in a procession

<sup>231</sup> This is called transubstantiation: the bread and wine become the real presence of Christ.

After communion the community singing of the thanksgiving hymn in Cebuano was remarkable. The crowd raised their hands to wave back and forth in rhythm with the song (fig. 6.15). While a bit subdued compared to the entrance dance, it was nevertheless another *communitas* moment. Afterwards, the *fiesta* organisers distributed awards to those who played significant roles in the *fiesta*. The passing on of responsibility of the current *hermano/hermana mejores* to those assuming the responsibility the following year was ritualised through the gesture of passing on the *Santo Niño* icons. Immediately following this, the numerous icons of the *Santo Niño* and some of the Blessed Virgin Mary brought by migrant devotees which were assembled in a table at the front (fig. 6.16) were blessed.

6.16: 2009 *Santo Niño* Icons (*fiesta* sponsor in the background)



After the blessing, the crowd slowly dispersed as devotees claimed their icons to take back home. The total mood was festive as devotees had their photos taken carrying their icons, as well as the main icon. When I asked a group if I could take a photo of them for my research, they willingly posed with their

icons, while making me promise, in a joking manner, not to use the photo to frighten the rats (“*basta ba di pantakot sa daga*”; fig. 6.17). This jovial exchange among strangers demonstrates ritual’s efficacy in forging community bonds.

6.17: *Santo Niño-Sinulog Fiesta* 2009 Auckland - devotees



Lunch followed. The *hermanos* and *hermanas mayores* led the special guests towards a private room for the special food prepared for them, the equivalent of the ‘presidential table’ in homeland events denoting prestige and importance (see pp. 247-248). The crowd meanwhile dispersed, some went outside the centre to buy lunch from the different stalls offering Filipino dishes (fig. 6.18). Rice immediately ran out in one stall. Those standing at the back of the queues were left with fewer options when their turn came up. But all remained cheerful. Jokes were told while waiting for their turn. There was a lot of ribbing about appetite and food choices. In the end, everyone seemed pleased with what they got. The whole ambience remained festive, as people



[illegible]

Meanwhile, the portion of the crowd that remained inside formed small circles, bringing out food and drinks to share with family and friends. The choir and the *fiesta* volunteers were given lunch packs by the organisers and also ate together. By this time, the hall was filled with the sound of conversations from the different groups gathered in circles. Different regional languages could be heard, and notably, there was a significant presence of migrants coming from Luzon, the Philippines' north island where Manila, the capital metropolis is located, because the predominant language of conversation was Filipino/Tagalog.



After lunch, the *fiesta* programme commenced. For the first time in Auckland, a *Sinulog* dance contest was held. Four groups presented different dance interpretations of the *Sinulog*. It was apparent from the costumes and the props used that each group had spent a lot of time preparing for the programme (fig. 6.19a, b, c, d).



6.19a: 2009 Programme



6.19b: 2009 Programme



6.19c: 2009 Programme



6.19d: 2009 Programme

Aside from the competing *Sinulog* dances, some songs and a jazz dance number were presented as well. Through it all, the audience remained engaged and enthusiastic. The emcees had to plead a couple of times for enough floor space for the performers. And even after the last performance was over, the

crowd stayed on for some time greeting friends and acquaintances and chatting.

### **Sacred-secular connections**

The *fiesta* is an intimate dance between the sacred and the material. This is seen in the important role of material resources in the planning, organisation and actual celebration of the *fiesta* involving commodity transaction and movement. The physical set-up of the *fiesta* site reflected this: the food stalls, the *fiesta* signboard carrying the IREmit company logo (fig. 6.20a); and the logos of other sponsors, such as the Western Union and Planet Earth Travel Agency (fig. 6.20b) posted on the entrance and the walls of the hall. As previously mentioned, outside the centre there were food stalls offering Filipino dishes. Each stall had a logo with a menu of offered dishes and contact numbers. The main entrance lobby had various advertising exhibits, one of them the results of a photo competition with the theme, “Filipino life in New Zealand” sponsored by the *Tahanang Pilipino Aotearoa* Trust (fig. 6.20c). The choice of name is by itself significant. *Tahanan* means home. As an organisational name it impacts on the migrant’s homeland connection and the process of home-making in New Zealand. This connects with Tyner’s (2000) observation that *Tahanan* is a popular name of Filipino migrant organisations. Tables with flyers of the *fiesta* sponsors were strategically

placed near the entrance doors. Enterprising sales representatives of the companies were on hand to answer queries from the prospective clients.



The sacred's intimate connection with the material becomes more apparent in the structure of administration and management of the *fiesta*. The *hermano/hermana mejores* assume responsibility for the whole “*fiesta* production,” from planning to actual implementation, involving funding, tasking and providing all material requisites (program, music, sound system, food, prizes, etc.). The *fiesta* souvenir programme contains advertising slots that commensurate with cash donations to help raise the amount for expenses such as hall rental, decoration materials and food for the guests.

The most important material component of the *fiesta* is the sacred icon (fig. 6.21). The icon is central to the celebration of the novena masses and the *fiesta*

procession. Sacred icons are mostly hand carved from quality wood. Consequently, large icons command high prices, even more so those specially commissioned for overseas destinations like New Zealand. Gerard, one of the *fiesta* organisers stated:

Right now... we are using two statues.<sup>232</sup> We just ordered seven statues, and it cost us a lot of money, around five thousand New Zealand (dollars). And ... there was also a devotee, who bought twenty five thousand pesos worth of *Santo Niño* ... a big one ...twenty five thousand! .... When we came here, we could not put it in the baggage,<sup>233</sup> so it had to be assigned to a seat. So we paid one ticket coming from Cebu to New Zealand for that statue.

Commodity transactions in the selling and buying of religious items are part of *fiesta* celebrations.

6.21: *Santo Niño-Sinulog Fiesta 2009 Auckland - Fiesta icon*



<sup>232</sup> This refers to the *Santo Niño* icons rotated for weekly visits around Filipino homes.

<sup>233</sup> The sacred icon was purchased with a donor's cash gift during Gerard's family vacation to Cebu, and was transported to New Zealand on the trip back.

In the *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta* celebration, the purchase and importation of the *Santo Niño* image from Cebu, Philippines connects the diaspora to the homeland in a unique manner, through commodity flows of sacred objects. However, in contrast to the detached and impersonal nature of other business transactions, there is a distinguishing feature in the acquisition of sacred icons. The main *fiesta* icon travelled with a Filipino family, and had been accorded an airline seat by “himself”-- a “holy” passenger among the plane’s ordinary mortals. I have previous shown a table on the side of the altar laden with *Santo Niño* icons of various sizes and costumes brought by devotees<sup>234</sup> to be blessed. *Santo Niño* icons carried by migrants preceded the importation of the *fiesta* and novena icons.<sup>235</sup> In whatever manner they came to New Zealand, the sacred icons’ presence demonstrates convincingly the Filipino migrants’ affective connection to them. The iconic attachment of Filipinos in New Zealand, in this case to the *Santo Niño*, reflects and mediates the diaspora’s connection to the homeland.

I have also mentioned that after the blessing, migrants came to claim their beloved sacred icons to be taken back home where they will stay until the next *fiesta*. Fieldwork observation suggests that most sacred icons kept in the

---

<sup>234</sup> People believe that a priest’s blessing gives the icons the “power” to intercede (Jocano 1981, p. 23). Blessed icons are referred to as *benditado*, and are believed to offer more protection against evil spirits and misfortune.

<sup>235</sup> There is difference in terms of size between the novena and *fiesta* icons; the former are smaller.

homes receive the same affective care outside of the ritual performance (or in some cases despite the absence of a community *fiesta*), which means that in this case, it is the Filipinos' pre-existing day-to-day icon devotion that contributes to the overall success of the yearly *fiesta* ritual observance. While the ritual heightens community solidarity, it is able to do so because of pre-existing affective dispositions towards sacred icons, which I have argued, have accompanied the process of migration and transnational journey.

Catholic processions transform open hostile spaces into sacral places. It is not surprising that among Catholic diasporas, feast day processions have popular following. Previously cited diasporas like the Italians in New York (Orsi 1985), the Peruvians in U.S. cities (Paereegard 2008, 2005) and the Sufi Pakistanis of Birmingham (Werbner 1995) use processions as a venue for diaspora inscription of identity over space. The procession of the *Santo Niño* and the Blessed Virgin Mary started outside the centre and went out to the street right in front of the community centre, following a circular path back to the centre. The movement from private to public space indicates the community disposition to initiate sacral claim to secular space. The encircling path of the procession sets the boundaries of the sacred domain and sanctifies it as holy ground. Postmodern secularism in New Zealand has restricted religion to the private space, prohibiting religious forms of expression, like

prayer, in the public domain (schools, community events and government-sponsored events). Filipino diasporic communities through the *fiesta* procession move from the private to the public, an inversion of secularity in the host cultural tradition. The private-to-public movement implies increasing confidence among individual Filipino migrants in their achievements and newfound place in New Zealand society, and is also an indication that the empowerment of the Filipino community, like the Italian women of New York, once previously hidden, is now slowly being “publicly proclaimed” (Orsi 1985, p. 211). The Filipino community, like the Italians and Peruvians, stake a claim to space by transforming the *fiesta* domain into a diaspora place. However, in contrast to the Peruvian’s *el Señor de los Milagros*, and the Italian’s *la Madonna*, the *Santo Niño*’s abode in the Filipino diaspora is not the church but the migrant home. After the *fiesta* celebration, the *Santo Niño* goes back into the privacy of a Filipino home as a member of a family who just happens to be God.

The initiative to invite a “Kiwi” to preside over the mass came from the Filipino chaplain who encouraged the organisers to issue the invitation so that the New Zealand clergy could experience the “Filipino *fiesta* ambience.” Other distinguished guests included some members of parliament (MPs), city

council members and the attaché of the Philippine embassy. One of the organizers recalled the participation of the guests in the 2008 celebration:

We had members of parliament, ministers and we encouraged them to dance. They danced. But they said, ‘What is this?’ This is how it is. *Santo Niño* is there to give us blessing and protection. But we have to open our eyes... It is already embedded in our hearts....

There are increasing efforts to include the New Zealand hosts in the *fiesta* celebrations in a bid to make them understand the meaning of Filipino religiosity and identity. This reveals the community’s embrace of the *fiesta* as an identity marker of being Filipino in New Zealand.

The whole flow of the *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta* celebration and ritual illustrates religion’s eternal link to the social and material. The *fiesta* performances in the New Zealand Filipino diaspora manifest its appropriation of sacred space within the multicultural context of the local Catholic community while at the same time exhibiting homeland connections through the *fiesta*’s historical, economic and cultural flows.

The main players of the *fiesta* are the successful migrants who willingly make their social and cultural capital available to steer the *fiesta* efficiently and successfully. These migrants are the “success stories” among ardent believers, and good examples of the abundant blessings of the *Señor Santo Niño* to those



who have faith. It is the status most of the poor Filipinos left in the Philippines can only dream about and no doubt petition the *Señor Santo Niño* back home. Perhaps some even vowed, while dancing the *Sinulog*, to donate five thousand New Zealand dollars (worth about 150,000 Philippine pesos, the cost of the seven icons bought for the diaspora) to church charity, if they are given millions of blessings. Though devotee intentions are turned towards the sacred, the *Santo Niño- Sinulog fiesta* celebrations mirror existing structures in Philippine society including economic class and social status.

From the migrant Filipino devotees making the transnational journey bringing their precious icons and novenas, to the sacred icons bought and imported from the Philippines, to the commercial food stalls and advertisements permeating *fiesta* decorations, to the costumed performance of the ritual dance, the *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta* rites exemplifies the sacral-material connections between two cultural spheres of home and settlement in the diasporic imagination. The *fiesta* celebrations in the sacred and secular spaces in Christchurch and Auckland locate the significant contexts of homeland memory and assimilation in a new home within the social-economic-political and the religious-spiritual realms. In this sense, the *fiesta* becomes a site for the construction of a distinct Filipino identity as well as the point of integration of the community to the local context of the New Zealand multicultural

society. But more important for this thesis, the *fiesta* celebrations and performances prove beyond reasonable doubt the continuing significance of religion, in this case folk Christianity, among Filipino migrants, that provides them spiritual resources in the transnational journey and home-making in a foreign land.

### **Summary and conclusion**

The chapter has outlined the various popular devotions in Auckland and Christchurch honouring Catholic holy patrons through *fiestas*, providing an ethnographic account of the two most popular *fiesta* celebrations among migrant Filipinos, the *Santacruzán* and *Santo Niño-Sinulog*.

The contestations in the 2008 *Santacruzán* revealed characteristics of the Filipino diaspora in Christchurch that are worth noting. First, it is not homogenous. The diaspora has a plurality of networks and allegiances. Arguably, the *Santacruzán* displayed (and even highlighted) the cleavage in the state of social relations and dormant tensions between the groups led by New Zealand brides, and those of newly arrived skilled migrants. However, the boundaries between the two groups are fluid, and other cross-cutting factors, such as regions, language and class, affect group loyalties and alliances. Different groups function independently of each other but are able to

gather or unify to support common goals, personages and ideas. The concept of group alliance, as mentioned in the previous chapter, means that in conflict situations, one takes the attitude of *tayo-tayo* or *kampi-kampi*, which means to take sides or be loyal to family and friends (see pp. 276-277). Winning followers and allies among Filipinos depend on one's amiability and approachability. Thus, the basic requirement of leadership among Filipinos is friendliness and popularity rather than competency and efficiency. In the state of Philippine politics, elected politicians are not necessarily the ones with good programmes, but those with known family names, populist platforms or famous entertainers (actors/actresses/singers/sportspersons) as shown by the 2010 Philippine elections.<sup>236</sup>

Second, the Catholic Church provides a space for migrant gatherings and meetings. It is also a space for contending community alliances. Factional groupings among diasporic groups tend to centre on regional languages. Perhaps coincidentally, but definitely worth noting, the different players came from different regional language groups (as well as islands) known for their natural distrust and latent animosity towards each other. Pertierra (1988, pp. 66-68) points out the contentious relationship between local politicians and

---

<sup>236</sup> The elected President in the 2010 elections, lacking credentials in terms of passing substantive laws in his terms as congressman and senator, rode on the wave of being the only son of famous parents, former President Corazon Aquino, and assassinated 'hero' Ninoy Aquino. Pacquiao, on account of his fame also won a seat in the Philippine congress. Basketball stars and actors have been elected in the Senate.

religious leaders in a northern Philippines locality by highlighting their competitive maneuverings aimed at gaining prestige and influence during the *fiesta* preparation and celebration. Such a situation is of course not feasible in New Zealand not only because of the separation between politics and religion, but also because of the marginal status of migrants in New Zealand's political space. Thus, migrant contestations may only occur in the diaspora space. The *Santacruzán* contestations are not unique as anecdotal accounts of other Christchurch migrant communities tell similar tales of competition for leadership and prestige. In the U.K. Werbner (1990, p. 194) notes "a line of cleavage" between Punjabi and Urdu speaking Pakistanis in Manchester. The *Santacruzán* was successfully held, but divisions remained, proving Werbner's (2004, p. 896) argument that diasporas "encompass internal arguments of identity about who 'we' are and where 'we' are going". In this sense the diaspora is a locus for multivocality and contestations.

Third, family, kin and compadrazgo play a big part in recruiting participation and support for Christchurch *fiestas*. Diaspora groupings and alliances tend toward family and affinal relations. The contending groups in the recollection and *fiesta* both had the unquestioning support of their families and loyal allies.

Fourth the *Santacruzán* procession, no matter how minimal, is a venture of a Filipino ritual into a foreign public space. I have stated in the beginning that space and place (in terms of work, residency and ritual location) are important components in the diasporic clustering and social interaction. The Christchurch Filipino diaspora has slowly moved from the private domain of family homes (in the barbies) to the public domain of the Catholic Church. In Auckland, given the bigger Filipino community, the move is from the religious space to the secular space. The construction of a distinct diaspora identity is spatially located. The diaspora's forms of identity expressions are also simultaneously identity inscription over space (Werbner 1995).

Fifth, since the *Santacruzán* requires "live" performers, migrant children and youth born or raised in New Zealand, including those of mixed parentage, get a chance of immersion into the culture of one parent, by assuming roles in the *Santacruzán*. The founder of the *Santacruzán* in Auckland intended the ritual to be a "teaching venue" of Filipino faith and culture for the diaspora children who were growing up in a different cultural context. In this sense, the diaspora is the 'cultural repository' of homeland heritage and tradition, even as these are open to adaptation as they are reinterpreted and revised in the context of settlement, like the '*fiesta* style barbies' and the *Santacruzán*.

Lastly, *Santacruzán fiestas* are occasions for aesthetic display and appreciation connected to the Filipino folk notion of *maganda*/ beautiful which are conflated with goodness (see pp. 187-188). While Filipino cosmology has been Christianized, the cultural notions of '*Malakas/Maganda*' continue to be expressed in the Filipino language and performed in aesthetic display.

Overall, the celebration of the *Santacruzán* in New Zealand manifests the historical, religious and social relations inherited and replicated from the homeland. Folk Christianity, Church and family play significant roles in fostering, maintaining and supporting existing diasporic networks and relationships. All contribute to the diaspora's important role of introducing and transmitting the Filipino heritage and culture to the new generation of Filipinos being raised in the diaspora.

The importance of ritual and symbols in the diaspora is highlighted in the *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta*. The sacred icon provides the symbolic key that connects the sacred and secular spheres of the *fiesta*. In Christchurch the *Sinulog* dance of the *Santo Niño* icon (held by the main dancer) is performed in both the secular and sacred spaces, displaying the iconic sacralisation of both spaces and the fluid boundaries between the sacred and the secular. In Auckland, this connection is made through the procession as it moved from

the liturgical space to the public domain of an Auckland street before returning to the liturgy site. This replicates the *pueblo* procession in Filipino hometowns (see p. 126) wherein the town is encirled and claimed as sacred domain.

The genesis of the *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta* celebrations in Christchurch and Auckland illustrate the major demographical flow and composition of Filipino migration to New Zealand. The Christchurch *Sinulog* began with a Filipina bride's thanksgiving, while the *Sinulog* in Auckland began with the healing and thanksgiving narrative of a professional/skilled Filipino couple. Through the *fiesta's* appropriated niche in the Catholic space, though still peripheral, the Filipino diaspora continues its narrative addressing not just themselves but also the broader audience of multicultural New Zealand. *Fiesta* celebrations are thus venues for the Filipino community's self-definition and on-going identity construction in the settlement.

Home and family are central recurring themes among Filipino migrants in New Zealand reflected by their use of home symbols in the *fiesta* religious rituals. The sacred icons of the *Santo Niño* and the Blessed Virgin Mary provide the symbolic representations of family stability in the face of the instability of migration and settlement.

The spread of Filipino migrant community formations had been for the most part a predictable process replicated transnationally without a central organising entity controlling and defining each community's goals (Werbner 2005, p. 545). Wherever a significant number of Filipino migrants converge, Filipino circles and groupings are sure to grow, followed by more formally organised *fiesta* celebrations. The Filipino migrant communities in New Zealand emerged from the private space of the barbies towards the public space, transforming customary ritualised practices into cultural and ritual performances of the *Santacruzán* and *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta* celebrations. Filipino *fiesta* celebrations are multi-sited and decentralised events independent of their region of origin and hierarchical entanglements and are mostly lay-initiated and maintained. While devotees collaborate with the church through the chaplains in the planning and organising of the *fiestas*, they operate independently of Church structures and levels of authority.

In Christchurch, the performance of the *Sinulog* dance in secular and sacred spaces indicates the Filipinos inscription of their national and diasporic identity in both spaces. However, while the *Sinulog fiesta* celebrates and affirms the Filipino identity, it also proclaims and affirms the Cebuano identity independent of the Filipino national identity and in the process point to the pre-eminence of Cebu as the first Christianised city in the archipelago. The



Filipino *fiesta* thus provides the reflexive space where Filipino identity is reflected on, interrogated and performed. In the *Santacruzán* and *Sinulog* rituals, Filipino national and regional identities are affirmed and interrogated.

Paradoxically, *fiesta* celebrations provide the space for transcending the boundaries of regions, economic class and educational attainment while at the same time reflecting and affirming existing boundaries and gaps between socio-cultural groups and economic classes. In terms of Turner's (1977a, p. 46) three-fold classification of *communitas* -- spontaneous (existential), normative and ideological -- it is apparent that the *Sinulog* dance *fiesta* ritual is able to gather and transform the diaspora into a spontaneous *communitas*. However, it clearly is not able to mend cleavages. The overall organisation of diaspora *fiestas* highlights the distinctions among Filipino diasporans (Filipina brides, skilled migrants, *hermano/a mayores*) in contrast to more egalitarian quality of the normative religious *communitas* wherein the outward signs of rank are minimized or eliminated to "approximate the conditions of the poor ... to be fully together with one's fellows and not segregated from them in structural cells" (Turner 1974, pp. 243-244). It thus stops short of transforming the various circles and groups within the community into a normative *communitas*.

The Filipino *fiesta* celebration in the diaspora offers paradoxical implications. It is at once a replication of homeland identity as Filipinos, as well as an attempt to embrace a new hyphenated identity as Filipino-New Zealanders. This chapter has demonstrated that among Filipino migrants, the performance of folk devotional rituals is historically founded but has contemporaneous purposes and goals: to create a distinct Filipino identity as a leverage for a desired hyphenated identity as Filipino-New Zealanders.

Finally, the ritual and symbolic representations in the *fiesta* performance strongly demonstrates and proves what I have proposed in this thesis: that religion, as practised Folk Christianity, continues to have a significant influence on Filipino migrants in their exercise of agency in the migration process and their efforts at home-making in a foreign land. This means that along with postmodernity's technological advance, globalised processes, and transnational movements, religion not only survives, but thrives among mobile subjects in mobile sites.

The next three ethnographic chapters focusing on Filipinos in Singapore highlight the existing class divisions among them, and the role of religion and ritual in their construction of a diaspora identity amidst distinctions and divisions.

## Chapter Seven

### Filipinos in Singapore, the Lion City of Asia<sup>237</sup>

#### Introduction

*We simply must bracket any claims to apprehending religious experience in itself and instead give our full attention to the primary way people concretize, make sense of, and convey their experiences: through language, and in particular, through narratives.*

Yamane (2000, pp. 175-176)

This chapter continues the exploration of the role of religion in Filipino transnational migration and diaspora settlement and is the first part of the three chapters on the Filipino migrants in Singapore. I continue to advance the thesis's main proposition that religion plays a significant role in transnational migration and diasporic adaptation by looking at the spiritual resources that provide guidance and support for meaning-making among Filipino migrants in Singapore.

Following the lead of the previous chapters on Filipinos in New Zealand, these three chapters show that folk Christian and Catholic religiosity and the hometown *fiesta* ritual provide and encapsulate the Filipino diaspora's three key identity markers. First, Filipino diaspora rituals reflect on the homeland's

---

<sup>237</sup> The title 'Lion City' was popularised by a statue of "Merlion -- a creature with a lion head and fish body designed as an emblem for the Singapore Tourism Board in 1964" (Owen 2005, p. 427). Singapura in Malay means "city of the lion" but there are no lions in Singapore (Parmer 1983, p. 49).

historical narrative shaped by centuries of Spanish colonisation which has produced creolised practices. Second, that Filipino diaspora identity is a performed and inscribed identity. Thus the presence of Filipino migrants in Christian churches both expresses and inscribes Filipino identity across borders, spatially. And lastly, Filipino space in diaspora is an appropriated space which is contested and oftentimes ascribed with different and opposing meanings by citizens and migrants, even those belonging to the same diaspora.

The chapter begins with a brief outline of existing Filipino social networks in Singapore, how migrants establish connections and communication links to both homeland and diaspora settlement. It looks at existing diasporic systems and structures constructed by the two major stakeholders in Filipino transnational migration, the Philippine state and institutional Christian religious groups, such as the Catholic and Pentecostal churches. It highlights active migrant church organisations and distinctive group and community memberships. It shows that group rituals reflect such distinctions. Like the previous chapter, this chapter illustrates how anthropological insights into rituals and symbols gained from the study of the 'natives' in 'nativelands' remain relevant to the study of mobile subjects and sites, in this case, Filipino migrants in Singapore. I again draw from Turner's (1977, 1975) conceptualisation of the qualities of ritual symbols as polysemous/multivocal,

self-referential and contextual to frame my own analysis and understanding of migrant devotional practices in Singapore.

From social networks and church groups, the discussion moves into the embeddedness of religion in Filipino migration. I continue to demonstrate that religion is embedded in the Filipino migrant experience by highlighting that migrant decision-making processes are affected by religion's two important dimensions: ethical and moral responsibility and devotional relations with the sacred. I demonstrate that folk Christian ethical dispositions and ideas about moral responsibility, highlighted by the practice of *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude), have encouraged migrant notions of self-sacrifice for the promotion of the well-being and unity of the family. I show that the Filipino migrant's exercise of agency and risk-taking in migration and adaptation processes are intertwined with the folk-religious notions of *bahala na* (God will take care), *kapalaran* (destiny) and *swerte/malas* (luck/misfortune). I also pay attention to popular symbols among individual migrants and small groups to argue that Catholic churches and the migrants' affective regard and belief in sacred icons' efficacious effects for change and transformation are related to the folk Christian view of sacred presence and engagement in human concerns.

### **Migrant social networks and religious spaces**

Like those in New Zealand, Filipino social networks in Singapore are facilitated by family and work-related circles. Family relations (parents, siblings and/or children, kin and *compadrazgo*) and notions of reciprocity are at the core of the continuing high levels of Filipino migration to Singapore as well as to New Zealand.<sup>238</sup> Economic advancement is not an end in itself for most Filipino migrants but valued for the benefits it brings to family and kin. The migrant narratives presented in this section show that while the need for better salaries initiates migration, the underlying desire for better wages is ultimately aimed at supporting the family as an emotional, social and economic institution. Supportive roles are not totally one-sided. The family may receive benefits from the migrants once overseas, but it is also the source of social capital in the initial stages of the migration process and settlement. Since overseas ventures are expensive, a social network of support is necessary. One's social capital is dependent on the size of the network of social connections that one can "effectively mobilize" and the amount of resources network members are willing to invest in one's venture (Bourdieu 1986, p. 249). Social capital accessed through a collectivity or community to support the economic goals and goal-seeking behaviours are not only limited to economics (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993, pp. 1323-1324). Research

---

<sup>238</sup> There are also cases cited by Constable (1999) when migration is an attempt to avoid family pressure and dependence.

participant narratives presented here indicate that migrant efforts to find overseas employment were supported by familial and social networks of reciprocity in terms of providing loans, raising agency fees, purchasing of airline tickets, and other forms of assistance such as advice, information on overseas jobs or contacts and care of home and children. Thus, among Filipinos, opportunities for migration may be accessed through pre-existing social connections, making it a “socially embedded process” (Tacoli 1999, p. 662).

Social and familial connections also explain chain migration. A previous study found that half of the Filipina domestic workers had been advised by family and friends to migrate while a quarter had relatives and friends who had previously worked or are currently working in Singapore (Huang, Yeoh and Jackson 2004, p. 352). This situation is affirmed by fieldwork data. Some migrants have family members (siblings, aunts, or parents) in Singapore, while others have former work colleagues, school mates or town mates from the Philippines who are also working in Singapore. For example, Cora, a migrant from New Zealand went to Singapore and was helped by her former university classmates from the Philippines who are already residents there to settle down. In some cases the families back home are able to gather information about other migrants in Singapore for their family members to contact.

Filipino migrants seek out other Filipinos in Singapore helped by friends and social circles who facilitate introductions and meetings that have a snowball effect. When I came to Singapore, a high school friend living in the Philippines told Greg, a successful chess player with an International Master (IM) title from the World Chess Federation, who is a Singapore resident, about my impending visit. Greg it turned out also happens to be a distant relative belonging to my mother's extended family, and one of my youngest brother's *barkada* or mates. In turn, he facilitated two informal coffee gatherings for a small circle of five coming from our hometown in a Lucky Plaza coffee-shop. All the five gentlemen in the group are well travelled Filipino cosmopolitans who had been to other work and leisure destinations. Greg previously worked in Germany and Japan, and the rest previously worked in Middle Eastern countries. While the group identified themselves as "hometown boys" and recalled the memories that went with this, they also showed a strong connection to their present context as Filipino migrants in Singapore. Like those in New Zealand, a shared regional language plays an important part in quotidian conversations and networking among Filipinos in Singapore. The conversation was in Bicol, our own language, indicating its importance in maintaining hometown identity and connection. The moment one enters Lucky Plaza, various Philippine languages can be overheard spoken among different



circles of Filipinos, as also noted by a previous study done by Yeoh and Huang (1998, p. 598) on Filipinos.

Regardless of whether the migrant circle is connected to work, home-town, or region, it is clear that among Filipinos in Singapore, some form of connection with other Filipinos is established and considered important. In the absence of family, Filipino workmates, hometown mates or those with the same regional affiliations, substitute for the family and kinship support systems in the diaspora. In this sense, diasporic circles become the surrogate families overseas, and constitute the affective building blocks for home-building that provide feelings of security, familiarity, community and a sense of possibility (Hage 1997).

Aside from the traditional face-to-face social networks, there are various social networking sites on the internet for Filipinos in Singapore. The most popular is Filipinos SG because its web pages offer information on almost any need a migrant may have, such as information on visa applications, accommodation, furniture, etc.<sup>239</sup> Other popular sites are Filipino Expatriates in Singapore,<sup>240</sup> Filipinos in Singapore/Facebook,<sup>241</sup> Kababayan Faces of Filipinas in

---

<sup>239</sup> See Filipinosg website: <http://filipinosg.com/>

<sup>240</sup> See Expat.com website: <http://www.expats.com/en/nationalities/filipino/in/asia/singapore>

<sup>241</sup> See FilipinosInSG website: <http://www.facebook.com/FilipinosInSG>

Singapore<sup>242</sup> and Red Dot Pinoys.<sup>243</sup> These social networking sites are administered by skilled Filipinos holding expat visas. Monthly magazines managed by Filipino entrepreneurs, such as Pinoy Village magazine<sup>244</sup> and The F (Finely Filipino) magazine<sup>245</sup> which feature issues of interest to Filipino migrants. While there are only about 44,000 Filipino skilled/professionals including residents and expats in Singapore, compared to about 116,020 unskilled workers (CFO 2010)<sup>246</sup> composed mostly of domestic workers, the expats make their presence felt in the printed media and virtual world.

The most active Filipino social networks are the church based ones. Overall, church presence and connections are considered important. Even secular organisations and networks make their presence known during Filipino church gatherings and activities. For example, the printed media associated with Filipino expat or professional entrepreneurship and management were distributed in church sites during the chaplaincy masses and the *Simbang Gabi* ritual. Filipino expats and professionals also have the most visible leadership roles in Catholic and Christian churches. On the other hand, the domestic workers on account of their massive number stand out as the most visible

---

<sup>242</sup> See Kababayan Faces of Filipinas in Singapore website: <http://kababayan.sg/>

<sup>243</sup> See Reddot Pinoys website: <http://reddotpinoys.blogspot.com/>

<sup>244</sup> See Pinoy Village magazine website: <http://www.freewebs.com/pvmagazine/>

<sup>245</sup> See Finely Filipino magazine website: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-F-Finely-Filipino-Magazine/166007946747550>

<sup>246</sup> Current CFO 2011 report show skilled at 44,100 and unskilled at 135,900 (combined temporary and irregular Filipino migrants).

sector among Filipinos in Christian churches. However, they have fewer liturgical roles in the diaspora's main ritual, *Simbang Gabi*, on account of their domestic work commitments.

### **Social capital, family, and folk Christianity**

From the discussion of migrant social networks, I now turn my attention to Filipino folk religious and cultural dispositions that support migratory processes among Filipinos in Singapore. I further advance my main thesis proposition that religion plays an important role in the process of Filipino transnational migration and home-making in Singapore in this section by showing that aside from being socially embedded, Filipino migration is also enmeshed with folk religious belief. While striving to explore the role of religion in Filipino migration, it is important to point out that it is not my aim to provide a theological nor rational explanation of religious practice and belief. Rather, I pay attention to migrant narratives, how migrants see religion in connection with the context of their world and their performance of religious devotional practices, to express their needs and effect desired change. Religion, in this sense, provides a framework for their meaning-making as foreigners in a foreign land. According to Orsi (2003, p. 172):

Religion is always religion-in-action, religion in-relationships between people, between the ways the world is and the way people imagine or want it to be... Lived religion cannot be

separated from other practices of everyday life, from the ways that humans do other necessary and important things, or from other cultural structures and discourses (legal, political, medical, and so on). Nor can sacred spaces be understood in isolation from the places where these things are done--workplaces, hospitals, law courts, homes, and streets--from the media used to do them, or from the relationships constructed around them.

Filipino migrants not only rely on social relations but are also reliant on the sacred. The notion of *bahala na* and trust in God's provision is part of the belief that the sacred is connected to the social, and even foregrounds it. Dottie, a Filipina migrant, explains this connection, "God helps you meet the right people at the right time that can assist you."<sup>247</sup> For Dottie, a domestic worker hanging-out in Lucky Plaza, God facilitated the contacts that helped support her migration agenda. Social contacts and networks facilitating/helping the migration process are therefore attributed to sacred intervention and assistance. This means that among Filipino migrants folk Christianity provides a sacred dimension to the interpretation of social relationships and life events. Social capital is interpreted as constituting divine assistance indicating the sacred's engagement in human affairs. In this view, one may then invoke sacred intervention to change one's life. I present nine migrant narratives illustrating the role of religion in Filipino migration through the migrant sense of ethical intertwines.. They illustrate how folk Christianity's ethos of family moral obligations, in terms of *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude)

---

<sup>247</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 7.1

to parents and obligatory responsibility towards children and siblings including the extended family, combined with the reliance in God's beneficent assistance in their search for *swerte* (luck) and *kapalaran* (destiny) are enmeshed with Filipino migrants' exercise of agency in the migration process and working situation in Singapore. The following migrant narratives demonstrate God's engagement in migrant experiences -- God helps them to find a job and a good employer; secure a loan for agency fees and plane ticket; successfully escape an abusive employer; heal someone badly injured in an accident; find an employer who allowed time for church; and even to find a good husband.

#### 1) *Uniqueness of destiny*

Sarah came to Singapore in 1996. She was supported by her family in raising the necessary agency fees. When she spoke to me, she had long ago repaid the family loan, and been able to build her own home. The concerted effort of Sarah and her relatives to raise the necessary amount to pay the agency fees highlights the importance of family in providing the social capital in migration. The drive for economic improvement initiates migration, but for Filipino migrants, it is ultimately aimed at improving the lot of the whole family. In this sense, the family is both the end goal as well as the channelling and enabling agent of migration and diasporic settlement.

At the time she left, her family and friends were wary because of Flor Contemplacion's hanging in Singapore just a year before (see p. 101-102). They nevertheless supported her decision, though reluctantly. Asked why she took the risk, she explained,

In my mind ... I said (to myself), that's how life is, it's all about luck. Her luck is different from mine. I said to myself, I will take the chance... God will take care. God shall have compassion on me.<sup>248</sup>

Human beings are rational and are “able to formulate explanations about how rewards can be gained and costs avoided” (Stark and Finke 2000, p. 87). Migrant risk-taking then draws its reason and strength from folk religiosity's notion of destiny as different and unique for each person. The unfortunate experiences of others are not seen as relevant or connected to one's own search for destiny. Sarah believed God's blessing would be manifested in her '*swerte*' or luck in her successful quest for employment and reasonably good working conditions. In this sense, her basic belief in each person having a different destiny was affirmed. This is similar to the logic of other migrants presented previously, Mercy (pp. 157-158) and Jessie (pp. 255-256), regarding destiny, and how chances may be taken to find it, because death can occur anywhere. In this sense, folk religiosity encourages risk-taking.<sup>249</sup>

---

<sup>248</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 7.2

<sup>249</sup> It is also worth noting that folk religiosity's action-oriented risk-taking, contrasts with the Marx's ([1844] 2009) view of religion as an 'opiate' that effects illusory happiness and uncritical acceptance of the status quo.

## 2) *God's plan and human cooperation*

Vannie has been in Singapore for more than a decade. Despite a tertiary degree, she found herself pinching pennies working in a lowly paid job in the Philippines. She wanted to provide for her parents in recognition of her *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude) for their efforts to educate her so she thought of migration. She was not a very religious person. However, urged by family and friends to do a novena so her overseas employment application might be successful, she performed the customary devotional prayers in Quiapo Church to implore the Black Nazarene for help. At that time, she did not have enough savings for the agency's placement fee and air ticket, but with the help of family and friends, an adequate amount was raised for her to be able to leave for Singapore for her first overseas job.

As instructed by family and friends she made it a point to go to church when she arrived because it was the best place to meet other Filipinos. She was fortunate to find a Christian employer who treated her well. She was given a day off each week for church, where she made some friends and before long was an occasional volunteer for church-sponsored activities. Vannie considered everything as part of God's plan:

It can be said that I had a lot of luck. But God has a plan for us that at times we are not even aware of. God holds the destiny of each one. We just need to ask God's help so our lives could be

made right. But we also need to be persevering and industrious. It's not only all about luck. Even if God is helping you but you are not doing anything, nothing will happen. I just do whatever is proper and God will take care of the rest.<sup>250</sup>

Vannie's migration, like Sarah's, was assisted and supported by family and social networks, along with devotional prayers at the Black Nazarene shrine, showing the connection between family and folk religiosity. Again, while sacred assistance is sought, human action is also required. Folk religiosity in this sense spontaneously induces action and trust in divine providence.

### 3) *A sister's familial duty*

Samantha came to Singapore to support her siblings at home. Orphaned at the age of eleven, she had to start working at a young age to support her younger brothers and sisters. As the sole breadwinner in her family, Samantha experienced various trials and difficulties that came with her dual role as provider and guardian of her siblings. While overseas, Samantha performed her family duty by sending regular remittances to an aunt who took the responsibility of caring for her siblings. Through Samantha's support, a brother was able to finish seminary training to become an ordained priest in their hometown. Samantha's case illustrates the reciprocal nature of family relations in Filipino migration. When migrants work overseas, family members take over the care and support of those left behind, helped in turn by

---

<sup>250</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 7.3



migrant remittances. It also shows the ethical moral responsibility of family members towards each other which is an inherently religious value.

Unlike most Filipina domestic workers who work for Singaporeans, her employers are Filipinos who encouraged and allowed her to go to church and join the parish choir and the Legion of Mary (LM). She is confident about the importance of religion and the power of prayer:

Our religion (Catholicism) helps in fulfilling and achieving our goals in life. We also know where we should be going and where (in the sense of life's direction) we could be better. Prayers are the only things that could help in our situation. Where else can we express our needs but to God?<sup>251</sup> (parentheses mine)

This account sounds close to Stark and Finke's (2000, pp. 91-92) proposition that "religious explanations specify the fundamental meaning of life: how we got here and where we are going." As someone who has needed assistance and a source of support at a young age, and seemingly has overcome various difficulties, Samantha's belief in a God who listens to the pleas of the human heart is not easy to question. Folk religiosity is experiential. Orsi (2003, p. 172) argues that the "study of lived religion situates all religious creativity within culture and approaches all religion as lived experience." Samantha's narrative shows that the apparent absence of folk religiosity in Christian theology contrasts with its strong presence in migrant lives.

---

<sup>251</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 7.4

#### 4) *Transnational family and belonging*

Liza, another research participant, is an active member of the Legion of Mary. While she was not an active Catholic in the Philippines, she was drawn to the church because she felt alone, “You don’t have a family here in Singapore... you are on your own... that’s why I really looked for a community.”<sup>252</sup> She found such a community in the Legion of Mary. Liza is not a ‘green’ migrant as she had been to England for two years and Hong Kong for three years, working as a domestic worker before coming to Singapore. Unlike other domestic workers, she did not choose to be in Singapore. Her British employers in Hong Kong asked her to move with them to Singapore. She has been working for the same family for thirteen years out of her sixteen years of overseas work. As a trusted employee she had on occasions been privileged to accompany the family on their overseas vacations to popular tourist destinations. It was easy to see that Liza’s more than a decade of work overseas with good employers had done her some good. She exuded confidence and had a jovial, happy disposition. She belongs to a transnational family; two sisters work as domestic workers in Singapore while two brothers are seafarers (one sister called her during our conversation). In Singapore, she met a Filipina nun assigned to a parish who later taught her how to form new groups and engage in community organising so as to provide peer guidance to

---

<sup>252</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 7.5

other domestic workers. She is one of the founding members of the Legion of Mary at St. Bernadette's. As a trusted volunteer and because of her innate honesty and long experience overseas, she is often sought out for advice by other domestic workers. She notes that Filipina domestic workers were very sensitive to 'vulgar' (or rude) language and feel easily offended by the Singaporean way of speaking loudly. She also notes that part of the problem is that Singaporean employers simply do not understand how important going to church is for the Filipina domestic workers under their employ. She has urged Filipina domestics to be less sensitive as there may be 'cultural reasons' for the strong language and tone, and offers this advice:

You need to do the things you need to do and leave the rest to God. You have to pray for whatever you are aiming for. If it's not for you, you may not get it, but if it's really meant for you, you will get it. You need to work for it and pray for it. (mixture of English and Filipino.)<sup>253</sup>

Religion, according to Orsi (2005) is about relationships, between humans and between heaven and earth. The relationships between human beings and the sacred is as ambiguous as those of human bonds and "their effects" can only be known in "practice and experience" (ibid. p. 2). Liza combines folk religiosity with pragmatism based on her experience. Everything that happens comes from God who grants one's destiny, but not without the cooperation, dedication and hard work of human beings. The reciprocal and cooperative

---

<sup>253</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 7.6

venture between God and humans indicates that destiny unfolds slowly in a process of discovery and close cooperation.

With five siblings all working overseas, Liza is part of a growing number of Filipino transnational, dispersed families. Their decision to work overseas has helped build a family home, increase family resources and maintain family relations. And despite an unskilled visa status, Liza enjoys a cosmopolitan lifestyle as a trusted family employee who travels to exotic places with her employers.

#### *5) Filipino family values and religious icons*

Katrina was a professional accountant in the Philippines before migrating to Singapore in 2002. Though an educated professional, she was orphaned at nine years old and so has had her own share of difficulty. Luckily, her relative guardians believed in good education and thus sent her and all her siblings to school. Upon arrival in Singapore, she actively sought a Filipino community by going to church. According to her, “I know that the surest way of meeting other Filipinos is through church.”<sup>254</sup> Asked why, her explanation was similar to that of Liza’s:

---

<sup>254</sup> Original text in Appendix B 7.7

Because you have no family here... you are on your own... The church provides the family you do not have, as well as nourishing your faith. Without faith, it's sad. Faith is the one that holds us Catholics here. If I did not get involved (in LM) I would just be going about without direction.'<sup>255</sup>

Similar to the Filipinos in New Zealand, Katrina considers humour as part of being Filipino. She looks forward to weekends when she can interact with other Filipino men and women because, 'our teasing (joking) bantering is uniquely Filipino'.<sup>256</sup> She considers family ties as the core value among Filipinos, noticed even by her Singaporean boss. Considering that Katrina is single, her strong sense of ethical and moral responsibility towards her family is worth noting because it indicates the importance of the Filipino extended family for migrants.

Katrina also thinks that the Legion of Mary's hospital and home visitations on weekends help Filipina members assuage their longing to serve family members whom they cannot directly serve. In this sense, religious practice helps in migrant coping and adaptation. She may well be a professional, but her worldview is framed within a simple folk religious understanding of how the sacred takes part in the workings of our world, as shown in her account of a comatose Filipina domestic worker, Jenna:

---

<sup>255</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 7.8

<sup>256</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 7.9

She was in the ICU and there was no one at that time so I was able to enter. She was just there and appeared like a vegetable to me. I told her, 'you do not know me, but I will pray for you.' I placed a rosary in her hand. 'Here is a rosary for you.' Her hand moved to grasp mine. She survived her ordeal. A month later, when I came to visit she was already in the ward with her husband. I told her, 'you do not know me...' but she said, 'I will never forget your voice and I felt the rosary you placed in my hand. Even when I don't know you I will not forget your voice...' And she cried... I look at the people around me... those who were not lucky (in Singapore). This is why I volunteer on weekends in a women's shelter and stay overnight to help out those who were not as lucky. (mixed English-Filipino)<sup>257</sup>

Katrina uses the rosary, which as previously mentioned is a popular symbol used in Marian prayers among Catholics, to invite the patient to pray for her own healing. In this case it becomes a powerful symbol of the comfort and security of a mother's presence, help and love in a situation of isolation. Like the others, Katrina attributes Jenna's healing to God who 'heard' the prayers.<sup>258</sup>

According to Lynch (2010, p. 50):

The sedimentation of religious narratives and discourses around particular sacred subjects means that adherents learn to encounter these subjects with the expectation that the sacred other will relate to them in certain ways -- as a source of healing, moral challenge, forgiveness, power, hope, blessing...

Once again, the symbolic imagery of God as one who is near and who listens is evident. The rosary she placed in Jenna's hand reflects her belief in God's power vested in religious symbols. Here, through the religious symbol, harmony and well-being is restored. Turner (1969, p. 33) notes that "one of the

---

<sup>257</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 7.10

<sup>258</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 7.11

main characteristics of ideological interpretations is that they tend to express the harmonious and cohesive part of social relationships.” However, they may also include oppositions (ibid.). By looking at the ‘unlucky ones’ (*mga walang swerte*), Katrina appreciates her own luck and blessed state and passes on the symbol of such luck to less fortunate compatriots. Her voluntary work indicates her belief that ‘luck’ can be shared and given. In this sense, inconsistencies may exist in their experiences, but they are relegated to the background of migrants’ reflexive interpretations.

6) *Just a day for church and prayer*

Julia was a former Carmelite sister who left the convent to help support her family. However, after one and a half years in Singapore, she was still paying off her debts to the recruitment agency. This was because for nine months she went through three employers who not only lived far away from a Catholic church but also forbade her from going to church on Sundays, each time incurring additional charges and fees from the agency for lost work time. She relates her experience:

How many months I was not able to go to church!! No day off. I needed to pray... because they are not hospitable like us ... I experienced that we are not treated well as maids in Singapore... I was not expecting this. I also wanted to go to mass. I just came out from the Carmelites, that’s why I wanted to go to church ... I just accepted that whatever happened to me in Singapore is God’s will. I prayed hard to be able to go to mass. I was really longing

to attend mass. I prayed hard... Then, finally, my fourth employer allowed me to go to mass every other day and join church organisations. God is indeed alive in this world. I would advise other migrants to not lose hope and to always pray (mixed English and Filipino).<sup>259</sup>

Despite her experience of three difficult Singaporean employers, Julia never lost hope in a God who can help change her lot. The experience affirmed her belief in God's presence and assistance because God considered and granted her legitimate request for a better deal, a day off to go to church. Julia was clear about her priority in life. While it is true that she came to Singapore to help support her family, it was not to be done by sacrificing her Christian commitment. In this sense, while the economic dimension of migration is explicit in her case, her attitude also shows that Christian religious belief and practice are of equal importance.

#### *7) Domination, astuteness and prayer*

Nicole is an Ilocana who comes from Ilocos, northern Philippines, a people known for hard work and frugality. She was the longest serving among the informants I interviewed with twenty three years as a domestic worker in Singapore. As is almost the norm in Ilocos, a good number of her cousins are also overseas, in Canada and the U.S. She notes that while her present employer treats her well, there was one who did not:

---

<sup>259</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 7.12



The man was very mean for five years... I did not cease asking God for help, I cried... I'm talking to God everyday... it helps a lot... God heard me. If you have no religion, you have no direction in life. If you have a problem, where do you cry? So you have a friend, but can she help you? Life has challenges. They will not be given if we are not able to handle them. Brace your mind and your heart. .. Don't lose hope.<sup>260</sup>

She also sees life's difficulty as part of a divine plan, one that will not be fulfilled unless one can handle it. In her view, God allows suffering, but also hears one's plea for relief. She endured her five-year ordeal, explaining, "In the end you need them (the employers) for something... a good reference letter so you can find a better employer."<sup>261</sup> Her response to a difficult situation was pragmatic: kindness, so the employer would not have a reason for withholding a reference when her contract expired, and educating the children under her care in basic good manners and right conduct:

It is not just because of money that you help. You have to be kind to them. You have to teach them (the children) because if you do not, they will abuse you. I became strong because there was need. There is no one here to help you.<sup>262</sup>

Nicole's narrative may suggest passive acceptance of her plight, but it also points to an astute response based on conscious awareness of unequal power relations between employers and domestic workers. While seeking God's intervention, she acted using the leverage she had, her power in the domestic domain no matter how limited, as the caregiver entrusted with the basic

---

<sup>260</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 7.13

<sup>261</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 7.14

<sup>262</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 7.15

socialisation and care of her wards. In her narrative Nicole combines the folk religious notion of suffering and the way to redemption through acts of justice. I previously mentioned the popularity of the Black Nazarene icon among Filipinos (see pp. 171, 173-174), especially those who are suffering from various afflictions. Anecdotal comments from church-connected people explained that the two most popular icons of Jesus in the Philippines are the *Santo Nino* and the suffering Black Nazarene: the former represents idyllic innocence (a mythical state of paradise), while the latter represents the living pains of righteous martyrs, a popular theme of Filipino folklore. In this sense, folk religiosity is a spiritual resource encouraging migrant resilience in their state of marginality or, as in Nicole's case, suffering.

#### 8) *The unlucky ones*

I met Jessica during one of the *Simbang Gabi* novena masses. She was seated right in front of me, part of the group of residents from a women's crisis centre in Singapore. Crisis centres are usually operated by NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) and FBOs (Faith Based Organisations) to assist migrant women in crisis, those who have been abused, expelled by employers, runaways escaping abuse, exploitation or harassment, and those short changed by agencies. Jessica, like many other Filipina domestic workers, migrated to provide for her children's education so they could finish their studies, and as a

caring daughter, she also wanted to help provide for the cost of the care for her aging parents in appreciation of her debt of gratitude to them.<sup>263</sup> Asked how she and the other women ended up at the centre, she explained:

We are the unlucky ones here in Singapore. Some of us were cheated by the recruitment agency. They promised good jobs but they weren't good. Others, like me, are not lucky in terms of employer. My employer's attitude is really bad. I had no day off. She is foul mouthed. She habitually scolded, insulted and diminished me. They treated me as if I am not human. I was praying, 'God, please help me endure and go through (survive) this trial.' Then she also hurt me. I told them I will just leave. But they won't allow me. So I said, God will take care... God has compassion. I just escaped.<sup>264</sup>

Jessica's use of the word *swerte* or luck resonates with those of Sarah and Vannie as well as other Filipino informants in New Zealand. But more importantly for Jessica, God also allows and even encourages human action for emancipation and liberation. Her daring escape was divinely sanctioned. In this sense, there is no clear divide between belief and action. Lay theologian De Mesa (2000) argues that God's relationship with people is self-initiated and expressed by making people "feel" divine graciousness and goodness. In this sense, as Jessica prays, God bestows the necessary blessing, allowing her to escape. For Sarah, Jessica, Katrina, Liza, and Vannie and some others, God has compassion and is moved by human supplications through prayers, which changes one's life.

---

<sup>263</sup> Original texts in Appendix B Chapter 7.16 and 7.17 respectively

<sup>264</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 7.18

9) *Boundary crossings: from Singapore to New Zealand*

Sabina's story as a New Zealand bride began in Singapore. In contrast with the general pattern among NZ brides' courtship by mail, Sabina was courted in person by her then future husband in Singapore in a Cinderella-like story. Separated from a common-law husband in the Philippines, Sabina came to Singapore to work as a domestic worker. However, she pointed out that her reason for migration was not because of a relationship gone sour, but to help her parents out of her debt of gratitude as a daughter, to send her younger siblings to school. She easily landed a job upon arrival in Singapore, but later discovered the difficulties of the job aggravated by her employer's 'attitude':

I was the all-round worker in the house, cooking, cleaning, washing and ironing clothes, and taking care of an infant. I was also the gardener, and learned how to trim the branches of a tree. My whole body ached after I did that. I washed the car every day. One time, I got sick. I had fever. So I asked my employer to please let her baby sleep with her because the baby may get the sickness. But she refused. She said, 'That's part of your job. You should sleep with the baby.' How can she not care that the baby may get sick by staying near me? I just prayed, Lord help me ... (original in English).

Fortunately, the baby did not fall ill. Sabina recovered from her ailment and continued to work for the family, deciding to adopt a positive attitude. Being naturally friendly, she became friends with her employer's expatriate neighbour. This neighbour was able to obtain permission from her employer for Sabina to work for them once in a while. Through the years of her

employment contract, Sabina was able to send her siblings to school, with one completing a diploma course. Sabina's family commitment resonates with other migrant accounts and is a central theme for Filipino migration. Upon finishing her contract, the neighbour referred her to another expatriate housewife, a Kiwi, Christine, who treated her well. Christine provided clearer expectations and instructions about the work routine in the house. She was also allowed some 'freelance' hours to work for the expatriate family she had previously befriended. One time, Christine's brother, James, came to Singapore en route a tour of Western Europe and England. Since he was the brother of her employer, she tried to be hospitable and make him feel welcome. Sabina recalls:

I did not really treat him like somebody special. He is the brother of my boss, so he is also my boss. So I also served him like them (the employers).<sup>265</sup>

James expressed his discomfort at being served because he was accustomed to doing household chores back home. However, her attention and service did not pass unnoticed. While James proceeded to Europe, he cut short his European tour and came back to Singapore to woo her. After some time, they were married and she followed him to New Zealand. When I commented that her difficulty in Singapore seemed to have ended well, Sabina smiled shyly:

---

<sup>265</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 7.19

I really thank God for this. I never asked for this luck. I only wanted to work well and be able to help my family. I said to myself then, 'God will take care, I will just do what is right.' God has compassion. Isn't it we have a saying, 'It is up to God to bestow compassion, and it is up to human beings to act?' Misfortune doesn't really last long. That's how it is ... Now I am okay.<sup>266</sup>

Like Jessica, for Sabina misfortune or lack of luck is a temporary situation. And like Liza, she believes that while *swerte* is helped by prayer, it is also equally dependent on action and hard work. Sabina's folk religiosity views *malas* or bad luck as short lived and reversible by proper action and adequate faith and prayer. If experience is the criterion for testing this belief, there is no reason for Sabina to question this view. Sabina's story once again illustrates how Filipino cultural notions of luck, misfortune, destiny, and God-assisted human agency figure in the process of migration and settlement.

I have previously stated that folk rituals establish intersubjective connections between human beings and the divine. The migrants' narratives point not only to consultations with their families but also with their holy patrons in their search for *swerte* (luck) and *kapalaran* (destiny) in the migration process. Most of the Filipino migrants were aware of the risks and challenges of overseas work when they considered migrating, but the cultural notion of *bahala na* allowed risk-taking in pursuit of *kapalaran* or destiny. When faced

---

<sup>266</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 7.20

with a difficulty, the notion of destiny is balanced by the belief in God's compassion (*may awa ang Diyos*) and bad luck's temporal nature. In his study of West African tribes, Fortes (1960, pp. 21-28) notes the Tallensis' belief in prenatal destiny. For the Tallensis, destiny is predetermined at birth, but bad destiny may be assuaged by ritual performance and offerings to ancestor guardians. As previously mentioned, among indigenous Filipinos, everything that happens to people is divine will (see foregrounding discussion on pp. 156-159). Destiny or *kapalaran* has been set by God (*Bathala*) even before birth and no person can raise his or her status beyond that which has been predetermined (De Mesa 2000, p. 75). However, God is seen not as "help-less, but rather as help-full" and "is perceived to be powerful (*makapangyarihan*) in situations when people feel powerless about them" (ibid. p. 76). Since everything that happens is under God's power and God has compassion (*May awa ang Diyos*) then God can change things. One needs only to ask God for assistance and mercy when situations are beyond human control, especially in cases of serious ailments. Destiny, then, is not totally fixed and inescapable. God holds the final power to decide, and one may appeal to God through prayers and rituals. Bad destiny or misfortune in Jessica's case was not accepted passively. She actively sought to escape her bad luck by praying and believing in a God who would take care of her in her daring feat of escape because God has compassion. When choices are limited or stifled, prayers are

made to supplicate for and effect change. Thus while destiny is predetermined, it is open to negotiation with a God who has compassion. In the end, folk religiosity's anthropomorphic view of God who, like humans can be moved by pity gives hope to an otherwise hopeless case of bad luck, and allows positive action in place of passive acceptance. This faith in God's compassion emerges as the primary form of morale booster in migrants' narratives. If the family is the central source of motivation and inspiration, folk Christianity provides the assurance of an efficacious sacred assistance in the process of migration and of needed intervention in times of distress and instability during the settlement process.

The central role of religion in the Filipino transnational migration and diaspora is manifested explicitly, as shown by the narratives, in migrants' commitment to ethical and moral notions of reciprocity and family (made concrete by material-commodity flows and remittances), iconic affection, and weekly devotional rituals.

### **Summary and conclusion**

The discussion in this chapter has provided an outline of Filipino social networks in Singapore. Many migrant clusters are founded based on shared



regional languages, school affiliations, and common membership in religious organisations.

This chapter showed that Filipino migrants have strong family relations and belief in God. Both family and God are active agents affecting the outcome of migration. Families provide the social capital while God through the folk notion of *bahala na* attitude, and the novena to the holy patrons, provides the assurance and security in the instability of migration.

The narratives highlight once again Durkheim's view of religion's sociality. Among Filipinos religion's sociality is located in the interiority and orientation among individual believers towards the social – the intent and hope for change in the community, and expressed in its function to gather the community in the performance of ritual promoting solidarity, which for Filipinos in Singapore is highlighted by the *Simbang Gabi* ritual which is discussed chapter nine.

God's mercy and power may be accessed through prayers and supplications. But while God is present everywhere, the seat of God's power and presence lies in the Church. For most, this explains the need to be in the church physically, especially on Sundays. Access to the sacred is also provided by

iconic symbols, such as the rosary, which are carried by migrants for protection, enshrined in their dwelling and given to the sick for healing.

Folk Christianity's performance of religious practices and rituals through individual and community prayers, and the change in the lot of those who performed them indicate that ritual is the medium of destiny's 'negotiability'. While destiny is pre-determined, it is not rigid. One may appeal to God in times of misfortune (*malas*) and ask for luck (*swerte*) in uncertain situations. Thus, while the family provides the motivation, inspiration and social capital for migration, folk Christianity provides the safety net and reliable source of strength, support and meaning in the transnational journey and settlement.

From the private sphere of individual religious dispositions, the discussions in the following two chapters move into the community's public religious performance. Attention shifts to the pastoral role of the Church in addressing migrant needs at the practical and spiritual levels and the Filipino community's performance of homeland rituals in Singapore.

## Chapter Eight

### Christian Churches and Lucky Plaza

#### Introduction

*[P]laces have no inherent meaning, only the meanings humans give to them*

Rose (1995, p. 98)

The chapter continues the exploration of the role of religion in Filipino transnational migration and diaspora settlement and is the second of the chapters on the Filipino migrants in Singapore. I continue to advance the thesis's main proposition that religion plays a significant role in transnational migration and diasporic adaptation by looking at how the Filipino diaspora identity is customarily performed and inscribed spatially in Singapore's public landscapes of Christian churches and Lucky Plaza.

This chapter draws attention to the process of migrant identity inscription over space and the contested quality of diaspora space. As the ethnographic account follows the Filipino migrants' transnational journey from the Philippines to Singapore, I draw from interdisciplinary insights on space and place and connect them to the migrant imaginary of the homeland and, no matter how temporary, to the new home in the place of settlement. For Tuan (1975, p. 152) a geographer, place is the "center of meaning constructed by experience," thus, "places are centers of meaning for individuals and groups." Tilley (1994, pp.

17-18), an archaeologist, views place as “an irreducible part of human experience, a person is ‘in place’ just as much as she or he is ‘in culture.’” Thus, “culture is spatialized” (Gupta and Ferguson 1997, p. 3). Hall (1995, p. 181) puts it simply, “when we think of or imagine cultural identity, we tend to ‘see’ it in a place.” Place is the locus of human experience where identities are performed, constructed, inscribed and contested. The identity of place is a product “of social actions and of the ways in which people construct their own representations of particular places” (Jess and Massey 1995, p. 134). Place is also engaged in the “politics of identity” because people’s sense of identity is enplaced within particular boundaries (Massey 1995, p. 68) that not only marks those who belong, but also those who do not (Jess and Massey 1995, p. 162). The connection between place and identity is frequently laden with deep loyalties, impassioned or at times even violent (Rose 1995, p. 103). Places are therefore neither neutral nor innocent domains but are subject to political and ideological positionings among different stakeholders and power brokers seeking to establish domination based on difference. For this reason there is a need to understand “how relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the ... spatiality of social life, how human geographies become filled with politics and ideology” (Soja 1989, p. 6). Rose (1995, p. 99) mentions ritual as a way of claiming places, but also recognizes that it can be accomplished through “everyday, small-scale kind of ways,” which I suggest, as will be

shown in the case of Filipino migrants in Singapore in this chapter, is simple presence or ‘occupation’ of particular places on weekends. This chapter pays attention to the process of migrant place-making, how Filipino migrants inscribe their identity in Singapore’s public landscapes, the Christian churches and Lucky Plaza shopping mall.

From the previous chapter’s discussion of religious dispositions as described by migrant narratives, the chapter proceeds to show various migrant programmes and services offered by Catholic and faith-based (FBOs) organisations. I illustrate how institutional religions’ missionary and pastoral activities for its members necessitate bureaucratic structures and material resources. Stark and Finke (2000, pp. 35-36) note that religions operate within a religious economy:

We use the term ‘economy’ in order to clarify that... the religious subsystem of any society is entirely parallel to the subsystem involved with the secular (or commercial) economy: both involve the interplay of supply and demand for valued products. Religious economies consist of a market of current and potential followers (demand), a set of organizations (suppliers) seeking to serve that market, and the religious doctrines and practices (products) offered by the various organizations.

I propose that Christian churches’ expansive response and intervention in addressing migrants’ needs and concerns in Singapore go beyond the level of

ethical, moral and salvific concerns, and are indications of a contested and competitive religious economy in migration.

From the sacred, the discussion turns to the secular space frequented by Filipino migrants in Singapore. The city's Lucky Plaza is called 'Little Manila or Philippines' by Singaporeans, conceding a part of their urban landscape to a group of foreign migrants. Such a concession, however, is not without negative connotations. I show in this chapter that Lucky Plaza as a "Filipino place" that gathers and unifies, is also a place of 'othering' and distinction. I also highlight the importance of Lucky Plaza as the locus of Filipino social interactions and homeland-oriented activities in Singapore in terms of communications, transactions, food production and consumption.

I draw on Manning's (1983, p. 7) notion of community celebrations' dual modes of communication, play and ritual, and Turner's (1975, p. 156; 1969, p. 28 ) notion of the dominant symbol's bipolar property, that is, the orectic/sensory and the ideological/normative poles, to understand, by analogy, the connection between the two most popular Filipino weekend enclaves in Singapore. I suggest that Christian churches and Lucky Plaza are not only mnemonic reproductions of the homeland, but are polar oppositions in the Filipino imaginary: between the *fiesta*'s sacred ritual (*fiesta proper*) and

Lucky Plaza's secular carnival (*feria*). I argue that migrants' customary weekend flow of activities between Christian churches and Lucky Plaza are fashioned as the two sides of the *fiesta* celebration in the homeland, and are thus both diasporic expressions of home-making. Religion as individual and community devotion intertwines, therefore, with migrant processes of home-making and the construction of identity among Filipinos in Singapore.

### **Christian churches and migrant care: programmes and interventions**

Migrant Christians are a significant presence at the Sunday services in most Singaporean churches.<sup>267</sup> In some cases, the number of services is increased to provide for (and entice) migrants, as with the Pentecostal church mentioned previously. The Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore, for its part, recognising the presence of thousands of migrant Catholics, has established the Archdiocesan Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants & Itinerant People (ACMI). Within ACMI is an organised Filipino Catholic contingent composed of different lay coordinators who initiate and support various Filipino activities. The group liaises closely with the chaplain, various NGOs and FBOs and the Foreign Workers Resource Centre (FWRC), a Philippine embassy initiated and supported programme. Together these various groups liaise in promoting various projects and activities for Filipino migrants.

---

<sup>267</sup> Buddhism has a larger following in Singapore than Christianity and other religions (33.3 per cent compared to 18.3 per cent Christian).

The ACMI spiritual director is a Filipino missionary priest who is also designated as the chaplain for Filipino migrants and coordinates all pastoral activities of the Filipino Chaplaincy, including occasional interventions pertaining to the pastoral care of Filipino migrants. The chaplain regularly officiates masses every week among Filipino communities spread over the different parishes of Singapore. In these masses, the Filipino language is used and Filipino choirs provide the liturgical singing. There is usually a snack that follows the mass wherein migrants may socialize with each other.

The Chaplaincy masses originally began at the Novena church in the early 1990s. The parish offers two masses in Filipino (or Tagalog) every second and fourth Sunday of the month. The Novena church has been popular among Filipinos because of its accessibility; a bus stop is located right in front of the church and a train station is within walking distance. Aside from the Novena church, the St. Bernadette church is also popular among Filipina domestic workers. All of the chaplaincy masses are well attended. In 2008, the chaplain was the lone celebrant of the nine-day *Simbang Gabi* novena masses, which, as shown in the next chapter, drew thousands every night. More importantly, beyond the ritual, the Filipino chaplaincy has consistently provided important information and assistance for migrants. In July 2008, during the first weekend of my fieldwork, three domestic workers arrived a few minutes after the

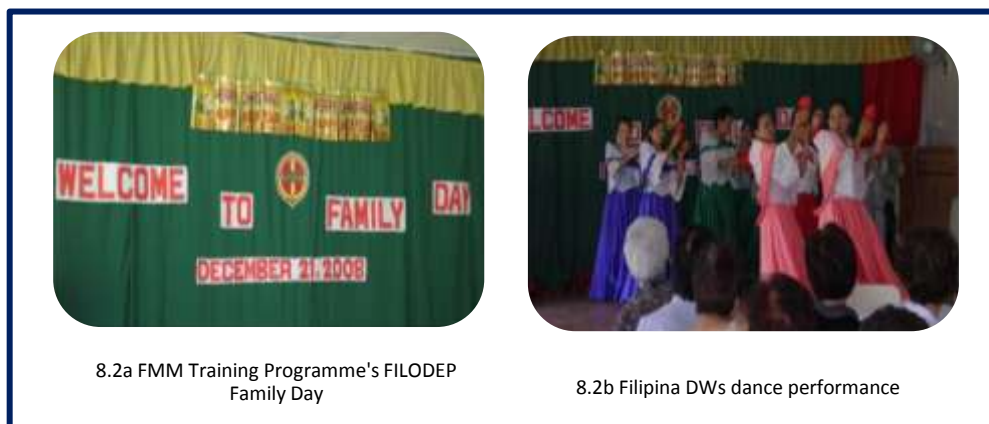


Chaplaincy mass. One carried a plastic bag, presumably containing her scant belongings, her face tear streaked. She was accompanied by two friends, one of whom had her arms over her shoulder for comfort and assurance. All three looked tired and highly stressed. Asking the few of us left inside the church where the chaplain was, they went towards the direction indicated by those who knew. One could surmise that the woman's tears did not arise from a pleasant experience. Among those approached for information, no one showed any surprise, indicating knowledge of similar occurrences, either personally encountered or heard about. I was assured that the woman would find a safe shelter in any one of the crisis centres around Singapore.



Most migrant crisis centres in Singapore are NGO and FBO managed and supported. For example, the sisters of Religious of the Good Shepherd (RGS) congregation runs a crisis centre for women, regardless of ethnicity or religious affiliation, who are victims of abuse and domestic violence. The Philippine embassy also operates a shelter for migrant Filipinas who find

themselves in crisis situations, for example, being cheated by agencies or abused and exploited by Singaporean employers.



In addition to the crisis centres, there are skills training programmes for migrants managed by the Catholic nuns such as the RGS and FMM (Franciscan Missionaries of Mary). These programmes are run in collaboration with the Philippine embassy initiated organisation, the Foreign Worker Resource Centre (FWRC). The RGS weekend skills training programme for domestic workers is held at the sisters' compound in Marymount. The programme offers short courses in English, baking, cooking (fig. 8.1a, b), computer skills, Mandarin, etc. The embassy's FWRC staff collaborates by being the resource persons or teachers in some modules of the programme. Meanwhile the weekend programme initiated by the FMM sisters is called FILODEP (Filipino Ongoing Development Programme) (fig. 8.2a, b) which is also run in close collaboration with the FWRC through resource persons and

teachers.<sup>268</sup> Through these partnerships, the Philippine embassy has access to various FBO initiated programmes operating in church spaces. In this sense a close relationship with the Catholic Church is forged. The Marymount and FILODEP programmes are run every Sunday and are open to all migrants regardless of ethnicity and job classification. However, the majority of those who actually show up and participate in the training programmes are female domestic workers, most of whom are Filipinas, with a few Sri Lankans and Indonesians. While the two training programmes have a considerable following, specific skills session's enrollments are limited. They cannot absorb the tens of thousands of migrant workers needing a social space for their regular day-off on weekends. Lucky Plaza provides this social space, and in addition offers the festive ambience of the *fiesta* carnival.

### **Church-based migrant circles and church spaces**

Churches provide the space for migrant meetings and interaction which often result in the creation of small circles of social networks. The church is a place to meet and cultivate relationships in a newfound substitute 'family'. For the domestic workers, and unskilled workers, it is also a place to rest from long hours of labour, free from the demands of employers beyond the boundaries of locally and internationally accepted labour hours. Religion, according to Tuan

---

<sup>268</sup> I was not able to see this programme but was invited for its Christmas fundraising lunch. See [http://www.veritas.org.sg/catholic\\_directory\\_group\\_detail.php?GroupID=337&GroupType=Services](http://www.veritas.org.sg/catholic_directory_group_detail.php?GroupID=337&GroupType=Services)

(1977, p. 152), a geographer, could “bind people to a place.” Since historically, churches are the centre of community interaction in the Philippines, it is not surprising that Filipino migrants frequent religious spaces. Various Christian denominations, which include mainline Protestants, Evangelicals and Pentecostals, have more than fifty churches and centres, while the Catholic Church has 29 parishes spread over the city-state. Most Christian churches have not only welcomed migrants into their services, but even added new services for specific Christian migrants like the Filipinos.

8.3: Singapore 2008: Pentecostal community worship



A Pentecostal Church located near Lucky Plaza and the malls of Orchard Road has two regular Sunday services for Filipinos, one in the afternoon and another in early evening. The early afternoon service is popular among domestic workers, who have to go back to their employers before evening, while the late afternoon or early evening service is attended by Filipino professionals and

skilled IT technicians. In this sense, the time of worship is connected to class. In the two services, the band, the altar servers and attendees are all Filipinos, except for the pastor. Cell group leaders are mostly in their twenties and early thirties. Overall, the worshippers are young professionals (fig. 8.3). Members also belong to small cells who meet on week days for Bible readings; these cells function as peer support groups.

The majority of Filipinos in Singapore are Catholics and thus troop to Catholic churches on Sundays. Some Filipinos have organised Philippine based church organisations in Singapore parishes, while others have joined Catholic organisations that have a wide following in the Philippines. The Novena and St. Bernadette parishes have strong chapters of the Legion of Mary (LM), composed mostly of Filipina domestic workers, though a few have “expat visas.”<sup>269</sup> Since most members were women (at the time of fieldwork), the LM in Singapore was a highly feminised community. Most LM expats have found their niche in the Singaporean Catholic Church as altar servers and prayer leaders. For example, Katrina, a Filipina expat whose narrative has been cited in the previous chapter (see pp. 367-370), regularly leads the recitation of the rosary on Saturday afternoons in one of Singapore’s big parishes. Church

---

<sup>269</sup> Expat visas should not be taken to mean a higher level of educational attainment than the domestic workers, only that their jobs are considered skilled in Singapore.

spaces also provide the locus for migrant interaction with local Christians and an opportunity for assimilation to the host culture. At St. Bernadette's parish, Singaporean Catholics at the early morning Sunday mass are led in singing by a parish choir composed mostly of Filipina domestic workers trained by a Singaporean choir master and a pianist. The Filipina domestic workers have integrated themselves in the relatively small Catholic congregation and seemed quite at home among the few Singaporean choir members and musicians. Through liturgical singing on Sundays and membership in church-based groups they have constructed an identity as church-going Catholics and have found a niche for acceptance in the host country. There are Filipino choirs in most Singaporean Catholic parishes which regularly provide liturgical music in the parish and Filipino chaplaincy masses.

The presence of a number of predominantly Filipino Catholic organisations in Singaporean Catholic parishes demonstrates the importance of the Catholic Church among Filipino migrants. Filipino expats have formed a significant number of regular church volunteers and have served in various capacities as readers of scripture in the liturgy, communion servers, and church ushers (called wardens/ministers of hospitality).<sup>270</sup> The Legion of Mary is by far the most popular among Filipina domestic workers, though expats also constituted

---

<sup>270</sup> DWs also volunteer but mostly as wardens or ushers rather than as readers or communion servers.

a good number of its members. There are other established Filipino church prayer groups such as “Couples for Christ (CFC),” “*El Shaddai* (ES),” “*Opus Dei* (OD)” and “Block Rosary (BR)” in most parishes. The CFC community, which also has a strong presence in New Zealand, is very active in most Singapore Catholic parishes. *El Shaddai* (ES) group, which is popular among Filipino migrants in Kuala Lumpur, is also active in Singapore. In comparison to the Couples for Christ, *El Shaddai* is more ‘grassroots-based’ in the sense that its membership comes mostly from unskilled workers, especially the domestic workers, though there is also a significant number of skilled expats. Bigger *El Shaddai* prayer meetings are held in the church while some smaller meetings are held in the homes of members.<sup>271</sup>

The social groupings of the professionals and domestic workers in Singapore are discretely divided among Filipino church-based organisations. While some religious organisations in principle are open to all kinds of Filipinos, only a few cases of class boundary-crossings occur. There are two ‘ritually similar’ Filipino church groups in Singapore, the Legion of Mary (LM) and the Block Rosary (BR). The Legion of Mary is an international Catholic organisation and parish chapters around the world follow almost uniform ritual patterns and pastoral activities. Each chapter conducts a regular weekly meeting in the

---

<sup>271</sup> The information about CFC, ES and BR came from the informant members as I was unable to attend any of their gatherings in Singapore.

parish, mostly on weekends, where members pray the rosary together. The weekend prayer routine has suited domestic workers who have days-off on Sundays. Since Singaporean parishes provide meeting spaces for Catholic organisations such as the Legion of Mary, the domestic workers are able to pray and socialise together every Sunday. Meanwhile, the Block Rosary, as the name implies, is also a rosary praying group like the LM. The name is taken from a popular religious practice in most Philippine parishes during the months of May and October which are dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The ritual consists of taking the Blessed Virgin's icon from one house to another around a designated neighbourhood block for a day's or a week's visit and praying the rosary in the hosting homes. The rosary is therefore not prayed in the church, but in Filipino homes. Thus, it is lay initiated, but encouraged by most parish priests, as it helps in bringing about community cohesion and piety resulting in increased church participation and attendance. In Singapore, the members of the Block Rosary rotate the sacred icon of Mary for home visits among its members in a similar manner to the weekly home visitation and novena prayers among the *Santo Niño* devotees in Auckland (Tondo 2010). Clearly, this is done because most members are skilled Filipinos who have their own apartments. While there is no procession involved in the ritual, the movement of Mary's icon among Filipino homes in a foreign country like Singapore is significant, because it illustrates a distinction between the Legion



of Mary domestic workers and the Block Rosary professionals and skilled workers. Here we see two diasporic groups adopting the same ritual, the rosary, but expressing it differently to suit the specific needs and situations of their members. Since the domestic workers and professionals are located in different social contexts, on account of Singapore's skill-based migration policies, the form of their ritual expressions are understandably different. As previously mentioned, according to Turner (1977, p. 60), rituals are self referential and contextual because:

Ritual and ceremonial behaviours develop in response to situations in which some transition, ambiguity, conflict, or uncontrollable element threatens a given structure of relations either explicitly, or simply by remaining beyond control, implicitly.

In this case the icon's role provides the metaphorical contrast between the Legion of Mary and Block Rosary groups. As previously mentioned, symbols are "multivocal, manipulable, and ambiguous" (Turner 1975, p. 146) and therefore the same symbol may carry different meanings for different individuals and groups. Among the Block Rosary members, Mary is a "guest" who comes into their middle class homes, while among the Legion of Mary members, Mary plays "host" to their homelessness. In this situation, the symbol and the ritual reflect class distinction. It also points to spatial distinctions, between having a home or homelessness.

The need for church space among Filipino migrants varies with each group. Church-based organisations are provided with regular meeting places by Catholic churches on Sundays. However, the remaining majority of Filipinos, mainly the domestic workers who are not members of church-based organisations, have limited access to church space. Space is precious in Singapore and is therefore carefully allocated. Singapore churches have large seating capacities, but limited grounds. Thus they are not ideal as ‘hang-out’ places. Weekend enclaves such as Lucky Plaza provide the migrants with a place to socialise with their friends. Most domestic workers stay in the church for the one-hour or so mass or worship services, and afterwards spend the rest of their day off at Lucky Plaza and its surrounding areas. Obviously, the domestic workers categorised as unskilled have more need for free and accessible spaces on weekends. This need finds satisfaction in Lucky Plaza.

### **Lucky Plaza as “Little Philippines”**

When I first visited Singapore in 2002, some Singaporeans pointed out that there is a “Filipino place” in Singapore. Located in Singapore’s famous Orchard Road, Lucky Plaza is a moderate-sized shopping mall known as “Little Manila” or “Little Philippines” (fig. 8.4). The transformation of Lucky Plaza from an ordinary mall with average business activity into a dynamic space filled with moving bodies is impressive. That it becomes a ‘Filipino

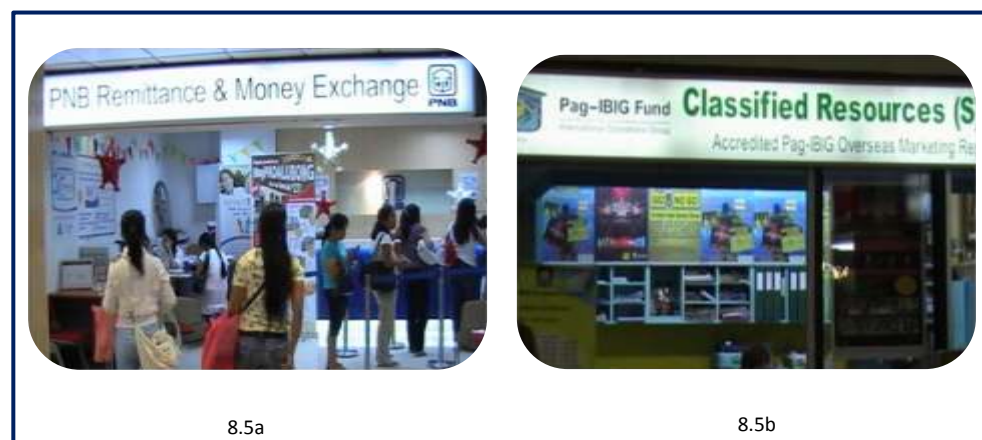
mall' on Sundays is close to incredible! A decade before, Yeoh and Huang (1998, p. 598) observed the weekend Filipino crowd's "colonising" of Lucky Plaza's "every nook and cranny" with a prevailing "carnavalesque" atmosphere among them. The weekend transformation continues at present.

8.4: Lucky Plaza 2008



Due to its massive numbers the Filipino crowd spills over into the areas around nearby buildings, especially the patches of garden space in front of Lucky Plaza, including the steps of the MRT station on the opposite side. Two floors of Lucky Plaza have Filipino oriented shops, mostly owned by Singaporeans married to Filipinas, who hire relatives as shop assistants. Numerous stores sell Filipino goods or products such as food delicacies, Filipino magazines and novels, handicrafts and souvenirs, and even T-Shirts and clothes with Philippine prints and designs.

Lucky Plaza is also a central communications and financial hub. It hosts a branch of the Philippine National Bank (PNB) and other financing companies like the *Pinoy Express* which are open on Sundays from midday until early evening to take care of migrant banking and remittance needs. Every weekend, there is a steady queue at the Philippine National Bank (PNB), and the Philippine Government Housing Finance Corporation (Pag-IBIG) (fig.8.5a, b).



Packaging companies in Lucky Plaza's upper floors offer special prices for sending packages back to the homeland. Transnational banking and packaging institutions play an important role in sustaining familial connections and provide a concrete channel for migrant expressions of deep affection and care for the family left behind. A Filipina customer, Perla, confided,

I just sent some amount for the school expenses of my children, which is why I am at peace because I know they are not in any difficulty.<sup>272</sup>

The difficulty of separation is assuaged by remittances and packages that bridge the distance between the migrants and family members in the homeland, mediated by business institutions operating transnationally.

Other business and commercial stalls in the upper floor offer reasonably priced beauty and health care services, such as haircuts, manicures and pedicures, as well as skin care treatment, mostly by Filipinas and some Filipino gay male beauty consultants. One shop is named *Maganda* Sexy Beauty Salon & Boutique. It must be recalled that *maganda* or ‘beautiful’ comes from *Tagalog* cosmology (see pp. 187-188) and that aesthetic beauty is associated with goodness and is an important part of public image and decorum as exemplified in the *Santacruzán* ritual procession (see pp. 192-195). In her study of the Filipina domestic workers in Taiwan, Lan (2003, p. 539) notes that through physical or “material markers” expressed in make-up, signature clothes, manicured nails and jewellery, Filipina domestic workers shed their domestic worker personas to recover, even if temporarily, their feminine identity, which for the most part of the week had been subsumed by their roles in foreign domestic spaces.

---

<sup>272</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 8.1

On a floor right above the shops selling Filipino products is a popular karaoke bar and disco. The karaoke staff makes regular rounds along the floors of Lucky Plaza to entice different Filipina clusters into the pub for free karaoke and disco dancing. Most of those approached ignored the invitation and just continued chatting with each other. I asked a few why they did not want to accept the offer of free admission. Speaking for her companions, Sabel explains “We don’t have an inclination for that (disco).”<sup>273</sup> Bernie points out that ‘free admission’ offers are usual and given to all ‘Filipina ladies’ around the vicinity. When I asked why, she smiled shrewdly:

Because if it is (the admission) not free, the Filipinas will not enter (the disco pub). If there are no girls inside, their customers will have no one to dance with. That’s why they need to convince the Filipina ladies here (at Lucky Plaza) to enter.<sup>274</sup>

Special perks targeting Filipino migrant workers as “major customers on Sunday afternoons” have also been observed in Taipei where pubs offer “free shuttles to transport migrant workers from the church to the clubs” (Lan 2003b, p. 539). But male-female social meetings among migrants do not only happen at Karaoke bars because some Filipina domestic workers have been regularly spotted going to church with their South Asian boyfriends. Social meetings therefore occur over sacred and secular spaces all the time.

---

<sup>273</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 8.2

<sup>274</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 8.3

An important factor in Lucky Plaza's popularity among Filipinos is the presence of Filipino food. Places offering migrants their preferred food eventually grow and develop into migrant enclaves for social interaction and fellowship. Various studies point out the importance of 'food ways' to urban centres<sup>275</sup> with diverse populations and food preferences. The presence of Filipino food in Lucky Plaza shows some similarities with the food consumption and production from some scholarly studies done among diasporic groups: the Ghanaians in London (Tuomainen 2009); Arabic and South Asian women in Canada (Vallianatos and Raine 2008); Koreans in the U.S. (Bergquist 2006); Indians in Britain (Highmore 2009); and the Indonesian women in Sydney (Frost 2008). Food occupies a central place in migrant memory of home, community solidarity and identity in a foreign land. Hage (1997, pp. 100-101) notes that the ideological power of food exhibited in the food market comes from the essential association of food with home.

The success of Lucky Plaza's restaurants offering Filipino cuisine lies in their mnemonic significance connecting migrants to the place and imaginary of home. Filipino names given to the eating shops like *Kabayan*, '*Barrio Fiesta*' (barrio means village) and Pilipino Café, which serve favourite Filipino meals and snacks, serve to enhance migrant homeland memories of home. For

---

<sup>275</sup> See Beardsworth and Keil (1992); Crouch and O'Neil (2000); De la Peña and Lawrance (2011); Edwards (2011); Gardaphe and Xu (2007); Koc and Welsh (2001); Marte (2008)



### 8.6a Barrio Fiesta Menu (Filipino Meals)

Some of the shops use references to Filipino identity, like ‘Filipino’, ‘Pilipino’ and ‘Pinay’ (fig. 8.7a, b, c, d, e, f). Others are named after known Philippine localities, for example, Negrosanon (fig. 8.8a), which means to come from Negros island); Dagupan (fig. 8.8b), the capital of Pangasinan, north of Manila; Pasig (fig. 8.8c), a city in Metro Manila; Pasay (fig. 8.8d), another city in Metro Manila; Baclaran (fig. 8.8e), a district of Parañaque where the



national shrine of the Mother of Perpetual Help is located, and Bicol (fig. 8.8f) a region in the southern part of the island of Luzon, where my hometown is.



Appadurai (2003, p. 343) points out that ‘deterritorialization’ is followed by various forms of ‘reterritorialization.’ Aside from the food, the Filipino names given to the Lucky Plaza shops indicate an attempt at reterritorialisation or renaturalisation of Singapore by overlaying space with various Filipino homeland localities. This is important in creating the ambience of migrants’ idealised homeland memory and longing, and the construction of Filipino (or *Pinoy/nay*) identity in Singapore. Tilley (1994, p. 18) states:

The naming and identification of particular ... sites is crucial for the establishment and maintenance of ... identity... Place names are of such vital significance because they act so as to transform the sheerly physical and geographical into something that is historically and socially experienced ... places and things ... become captured in social discourses and act as mnemonics for the historical actions of individuals and groups.

Migrant places are “mnemonic places” that are “specifically designed and constructed to evoke memories, trigger identities, and embody histories” (Gieryn 2000, p. 481).



Lucky Plaza as a space associated with Filipino food and sociality helps maintain migrants' homeland connection and diasporic identity. It connects an overseas mall and all those who venture in it to the migrant homeland. Thus the reference to Lucky Plaza as “Little Philippines” or “Little Manila” makes perfect sense on account of this.

### **From the sacred to the secular: Church to Lucky Plaza**

I would like to revisit Frank Lynch's ([1962] 2004) assertion that the *fiesta* deserves attention in any discussion of Philippine culture (see p. 184-185) in

making sense of the weekend movement of migrant Filipinos from the church to Lucky Plaza. I suggest that the movement follows a pattern of behaviour, a cultural tradition they have performed back home many times before. In the hometown *fiesta*, celebrations begin in the sacred space (the *fiesta* proper) and move on to the carnival space. Bell (1997, p. 145) explains:

Most rituals appeal to tradition or custom ... and many are concerned to repeat historical precedent very closely.... Thus, traditionalism is an important dimension of what we tend to mean and identify as ritual, while activities that are not explicitly called “rituals” may seem ritual-like if they invoke forms of traditionalism.

As I have previously pointed out, the *fiesta* is an important religious and cultural celebration in most Philippine lowland localities. Attention to the communicative aspects of a celebration as suggested by Manning (1983, p. 7) may be helpful in understanding the weekend ritualised practice among Filipina domestic workers in Singapore:

[C]elebration embraces two modes: play and ritual. Play inverts the social order and leans toward license, whereas ritual confirms the social order and is regulated. The two modes are complementary as well as contrastive, and the tension between them gives celebration much of its piquancy and power.

This also brings to mind Turner’s (1975, 1969) conceptualisation of the orectic/sensory and ideological/normative poles of meaning dominant symbols express in rituals. In this case however, it is neither a ritual nor a carnival held on a ritual occasion, but a customary weekend practice that approximates the

memory of the ambience of a hometown *fiesta* experience. In this sense, the Sunday church attendance followed by an excursion and meeting with friends at Lucky Plaza done repeatedly and with regularity have become for most Filipina domestic workers a mnemonic celebration of the *fiesta* back home, metaphorically recreating memories of family and social bonding while simultaneously forging new ties in the land of settlement.

### **Boundaries of distinction: contesting space and representation**

While migrant enclaves draw migrants together, they are also by the same token sites of boundary maintenance and contestations. As previously stated Singapore is a migrant receiving nation and a popular destination for various ethno-national migrant groups in search of jobs and better opportunities. As a result of the country's sustained demand for foreign labour, migrant weekend enclaves or hubs associated with specific migrant groups have developed in many of its public landscapes. For example, Thai migrants are associated with the Golden Mile Complex, Indian and Sri Lankan migrants with Little India, and Lucky Plaza with Filipinos (Yeoh and Huang 1998). In these places different migrant groups 'hang out' regularly on their day off, mostly on weekends. The migrant preference for particular places has created some reaction among the Singaporeans, characterised by avoidance and moral judgment. A good portion of the Singaporean public view places of migrant

clustering or enclaves as places of corrupting behaviour where sexual liaisons begin. This perception is connected to Singapore's highly skewed gendered division of migrant labour, an extremely feminised domestic and service-related foreign labour force, around 150,000 strong, mostly coming from the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Indonesia, on one hand, and an extremely masculine construction sector, around 200,000 strong, mostly coming from South Asia and Thailand (Coe and Kelly 2000, p. 416). Suspicions of dubious and immoral romantic and sexual liaisons between these gendered cohorts (Yeoh and Huang 1998, pp. 593-598) have been aggravated by the public visibility of single and unaccompanied foreign domestic workers, and 'cruising' South Asian males in Singaporean urban areas. The prevalence of 'single' migrants is actually connected to the policy of prohibiting unskilled workers from bringing over their spouses and families.

The subject of romantic liaisons between male South Asians and Filipina domestic workers occasionally crops up in domestic workers' conversations. Filipina domestic workers are not shy to talk about Indian (most Filipinas refer to South Asians as Indians) male attention. In some conversations they even tease each other, "If we really want to get an Indian (man), that is easy... all it

takes to get them is meaningful eye (to-eye) contact”.<sup>276</sup> They are also confident that Filipinas have *karinyo* or charmingly affectionate and appealing qualities which attract more than average masculine attention. But while the majority of Filipinas I encountered in Singapore acknowledged South Asian admirers, most were aware of the risks such relationships posed to their family commitments. For the married domestic workers in Singapore who have children back home, exposure to male attention poses a “dangerous temptation because we have families.”<sup>277</sup> And even when they enjoy teasing each other about South Asian admirers and sharing a good laugh about various forms of male techniques at courtship, most of them, even the single ones, find excessive male attention a nuisance because their families (and children, for the mothers) come first.

The reigning suspicion about migrant interactions in these enclaves has at times affected relations between employers and foreign domestic workers. The perception of immoral conduct has been used by some employers to justify their increased vigilance in terms of controlling and monitoring their foreign domestic workers. The idea is to prevent the domestic workers from meeting male workers and other domestic workers who may ‘pollute’ or teach them bad habits. Subtle strategies are conceived by employers to prevent such risk.

---

<sup>276</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 8.4

<sup>277</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 8.5

Some employers offer monetary value for their domestic workers' Sunday-off, lend them as freelance domestics to relatives (sometimes for hourly fees), arrange sewing or dress-making classes with friends (with the domestic workers of friends/neighbours); and ask other maids (under their employ, or those of family and friends) considered to be reliable and well behaved, as well as neighbours, to chaperon the new ones (Yeoh and Huang 1998, pp. 589-591). The most extreme measure is the refusal to give them a day off, "for their own good" and prohibition on owning a mobile phone (Ueno 2009, p. 507). While the justification is on ethical and moral grounds, it is also economic. As previously mentioned in chapter two, Singapore imposes a S\$ 5000 levy on employers of domestic workers (see pp. 98-99) that may be forfeited if the domestic worker tests positive for pregnancy during the bi-annual medical tests, marries a Singaporean or fails to comply with the bi-annual pregnancy and STD tests. This has placed the burden of monitoring and discipline to employers, and in effect, criminalised foreign domestic workers' reproductive functions.

However, while the general picture of domestic workers' rights in Singapore may be bleak in terms of official policies, the Singaporean treatment of foreign domestic workers varies from household to household, in terms of the employer's personality and the domestic worker's nationality. In

general, Filipina domestic workers tend to be given regular days off and to enjoy relatively good salaries. This is because of their education, considered to be “equal to, or even higher than, the average Singaporean” (Ueno 2009, p. 510), and fluency in English, compared to other domestic workers. These advantages unfortunately have not prevented cases of abuse and exploitation.

While Filipino and host country media coverage have tended to exaggerate the social costs of migration like family separation and marital infidelity, research participants and scholarly studies point to the general stability of marriage and family life despite migration and the empowerment of women resulting from migration (Huang, Yeoh and Jackson 2004, pp. 337-338, citing Eviota 1992 and Vasquez1992). For the most part, the popular perception of romantic entanglements between domestic workers and construction workers is not matched by documented evidence. But it is also important to acknowledge that a number of romantic or sexual liaisons among migrants do take place, like the case of a much trusted Christian Filipina domestic worker who got pregnant, to the disappointment of her Catholic Singaporean employer (Yeoh and Huang 1998, p. 591). Regrettably, occasional occurrences like this have led to a negative perception of all domestic workers.



Ironically, some Filipina domestic workers share the views of the Singaporean public about migrant enclaves being potentially dangerous and morally polluting places. Some of the domestic workers who hang out in the church contrast themselves to those who hang out in Lucky Plaza's pubs, and see their church involvement as a buffer to *tukso* or 'temptation' from romantic or sexual entanglements, a mind-set similar to the Singaporean public's view. Migrant enclaves in Singapore are therefore associated with contending perceptions and meanings which distinguish, set apart or separate the undesirable migrant 'other'. At the same time, among the migrants, church spaces provide moral protection from 'polluting but hard to avoid' secular spaces, since such places are necessary for migrant transactions and communication. Thus, going to church is tantamount to an 'innoculation ritual' before venturing into a possible 'dangerous' zone of temptation.

The high visibility of Filipina domestic workers in the urban landscapes of migrant destination countries has also helped shape local perceptions of Filipino identity. In some European countries, popular perceptions of Filipino identity have been equated to the Filipina domestic worker. On a few occasions, the Philippine government has protested the definition of "Filipina" as maid prevalent in some local dictionaries.

The chaotic and crowded ambience in Lucky Plaza in a way increases the chances of socializing among Filipina domestic workers. Since they have to share precious ‘sitting spaces’ in the mall, small group conversations are easily overheard by those sitting nearby, and quite often, casual conversations are started, especially if they share the same regional language. Most of the time Filipina domestic workers are very open to conversations with other *Pinoys* and *Pinays*, even the strangers they meet accidentally. By contrast, I have found the professionals more reserved and wary, even calculating, of other Filipinos in general, though a few were very friendly. Others became friendlier the moment they established I was only a visitor in Singapore, and not a domestic worker. In a sense, while Filipinos are generally accepting of other Filipinos, there are implicit class distinctions among them. In a casual conversation, Sinta, who holds a managerial position (and thus an expatriate visa), revealed ambivalent feelings about Lucky Plaza as a Filipino enclave. While “Lucky Plaza has ‘everything’ Filipinos (migrants) like me need and miss from the Philippines,” she also revealed a bit later:

Ah, I only go to Lucky Plaza on weekdays or Saturday mornings. I avoid Sundays. It’s too crowded on Sundays because most of the domestic helpers have their day-off on Sunday. They (Singaporeans) may think you are a domestic worker if you are there on Sunday.<sup>278</sup>

---

<sup>278</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 8.6

She laments the fact that most Singaporeans only think of Filipinas as domestic workers:

It's really sad that they (Singaporeans) see Filipinas only as domestic workers in Singapore when clearly there are also many educated and professional Filipinos.<sup>279</sup>

From Sinta's point of view, while she clearly acknowledges her Filipina identity, it is also important for her to distinguish the educated and professional Filipinos from the common *tao* or ordinary Filipino, in this case the Filipina domestic workers. Hence, the particular day one visits Lucky Plaza provides a significant distinction between the Filipina domestic workers and the professionals. Amrith's (2010, p. 420) study of Filipino care-givers notes a similar situation among many Filipino nurses who "do their best to avoid Lucky Plaza on a Sunday." This avoidance has the ironic effect of making the Filipina domestic workers more liberated and 'cosmopolitan' than their professional counterparts (ibid. pp. 419-420).

Class distinction in the diaspora is thus about contested representations. Filipino professionals compete for the right to represent and embody Filipino identity in Singapore. This, of course, is frustrated by the massive numbers of domestic workers in Singapore's churches and Lucky Plaza. The Filipino professionals' yearning to be the 'face' of their idealised and imagined Filipino

---

<sup>279</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 8.7

identity in Singapore is connected to their own struggle for professional recognition. Conversations with some skilled Filipinos revealed their discontent at being given lesser positions than locals with the same experience and qualifications. Professionals noted that the Singaporean stereotype of the Filipina domestic workers makes the attempt difficult, more so with women. The association of domestic work with Filipino identity in the Singaporean imagination, and the efforts of Filipino professionals (including nurses) to dissociate themselves from such identity, highlight migrants' feelings of ambivalence as they vacillate between "pride and shame" in acknowledging and embracing their Filipino identity on the global stage (Tadiar 2004, p. 32). The idealised identity of middle class Filipinos resonates with the Filipino nationalist project based on the capacity and positive accomplishments of its citizens. However, professional Filipinos soon realise that their imagined nationalist identity does not match the Filipino stereotype held in the international global arena, and Filipinos' positioning among the different diasporas.

It must be recalled that among Filipinos in New Zealand, distinctions between Filipina brides and skilled/professionals migrants are also made (see pp. 249-250). This has also been observed among Filipinos in Paris. Fresnoza-Flot and Pecoud (2007, pp.13-14) state:

Our observations of the social networks of Filipino migrants point to the separate networks maintained by domestic workers-turned-entrepreneurs and those of upper-class Filipino entrepreneurs. Thus even through entrepreneurial success meant upward mobility in France, their social class remains unchanged in the eyes of upper-class Filipinos in France who are aware of their domestic work background.

As discussed earlier, the privileged or elite classes during the Spanish and American colonial administrations were better educated, had landholdings, and held important political, economic and social stature in the community (see pp. 126-134). Class distinctions among Filipinos have been an important factor for centuries and continue to be reproduced among Filipinos overseas in various forms, as has been shown among Filipinos in New Zealand, and is certainly evident in Singapore.

8.9: 2008 Lucky Plaza prohibition sign



While Lucky Plaza is known for being “Little Philippines” or “Little Manila” there are reminders to the contrary. Some Singaporean shops have

placed signs prohibiting people from using the front area of their stalls in Lucky Plaza as waiting places (fig. 8.9). Singapore's need for foreign labour has made migrant enclaves a 'necessary discomfort'. Yeoh and Huang (1998, p. 593) show that while more than half, 51.3 per cent, of Singaporean informants were willing to tolerate or sanction migrant enclaves, more than a quarter, 27.5 per cent, resented and viewed them as a 'social nuisance' and the remaining 21.3 per cent were ambivalent. As previously mentioned most Singaporeans have formed opinions of migrant enclaves viewing them as "physically and socially polluted landscapes" and too crowded for comfort (ibid.).

Urban centres all over the world have high-density populations. Thus 'crowdedness' is part of the urban experience in any part of the world. One only needs to observe train stations, popular concerts, and malls in various cosmopolitan cities to know that crowds are essentially neutral. It is the perception of the composition of the crowd and what it stands for that provokes and defines feelings of attraction, passivity or revulsion. The resistance to migrant clustering in diasporic enclaves by the Singaporean public brings to the surface deeply held notions of territorial ownership associated with a nationalist ideology. The issue no longer emanates from the categorisation of difference in terms of ethnicity and race, but from the

notion of citizens' entitlement and ownership of national spaces or domains (Ang 2001; Hage 1998). The boundary between the local population and the 'migrant other' assumes a spatial form of expression.

Despite local resistance to Filipino presence, Filipina domestic workers continue to spend their weekends at Lucky Plaza. Yeoh and Huang (1998, p. 599) view such resilience as a sign of resistance:

By routinised colonisation of public space and re-immersing themselves in their 'native' culture, these women temporarily reject dominant exclusionary definitions of themselves as domestic appendages of Singaporean households. Integral to their strategy is the persistence of habitual acts in recolonising space, despite various measures to curtail their spaces.

Migrant places, as I have stated at the beginning, are contested spaces, among Filipinos, and between Singaporeans and Filipinos. The Filipinos' habitual return to Lucky Plaza every weekend despite controlling strategies indicate the ideological power of place, food, and community. Perhaps the Filipino notion of "luck" resonates well with 'Lucky' Plaza, even if only coincidentally.

### **Summary and conclusion**

I have pointed out at the beginning that folk Catholic/Christian devotions and the hometown *fiesta* ritual provide and encapsulate the three key Filipino diasporic identity markers, historical memory, identity performance, and

spatial identity inscription. Diaspora identity is founded on a shared intersubjective history. Toren (2006, p. 187) posits:

Intersubjectivity is always and inevitably historically prior because, whenever we encounter one another, we do so as carriers of our own, always unique, history, and whenever we speak to one another we speak out of the past that we have lived. We do not therefore negotiate meaning in interaction with one another.... Rather, I make sense of what you are doing and saying in terms of what I already know: any new information is assimilated to my existing structures of knowing.

Part of the Filipino historical experience is the existence of class hierarchy separating the elite, the middle class and the common *tao*. Thus, among Filipinos in Singapore, the diaspora space is contested with the host society and oftentimes ascribed with different and opposing meanings by different class fractions. This is manifested in both secular and sacred spaces (in Lucky Plaza and in devotional rituals).

I have pointed out that Filipino migrant clusters have appropriated prominent public landscapes in Singapore as their weekend enclaves. Filipinos show up in droves in churches, especially Catholic parishes on Sundays. Indeed, their visibility in Singapore's churches cannot be overstated. The context of migrant strangerhood and marginality within the host culture makes the Church a symbolic representative of home and as well as a refuge. The Church as the home of sacred icons, of devotions and remembered traditional rituals,



mediates the migrant's memory of the past and the home longed for in the future even as his or her actual home had been reconfigured by migration.

The discussion in this chapter has also looked briefly at existing programmes and interventions offered by Faith Based Organisations, Christian churches, and Catholic lay organisations addressing migrant social and spiritual needs. The expansive response and intervention by Christian churches in addressing migrants' needs go beyond the level of ethical, moral and salvific concerns, indicating a contested and competitive field among Christian religious institutions in Singapore. Thus religion through its institutions and organisations compete for attention and relevance in the lives of Filipino transnational migrants (as well as other migrant groups) in Singapore.

Lucky Plaza is an important Filipino space because of its threefold function in the diaspora: as a social space for interaction and networking; as an economic hub, and as a food venue. Lucky Plaza provides pockets of space for small group interactions. There are enough corridors and lobbies where people may move or sit as they see fit. As an economic hub, Lucky Plaza is host to a number of banks and remittance companies, such as the Philippine National Bank (PNB), that are open for business transactions from midday till evening on Sundays. This is convenient for most Filipinos who work on weekdays,

especially Filipina domestic workers who have their days off on Sundays. In addition, the stalls have recognisable names and provide access to desired homeland commodities and services.

As a Filipino food venue, Lucky Plaza provides familiar hometown food. Food is the locus of most social interactions and networks in the Philippines. Its importance is manifested among Filipinos in Singapore where food continues to play an indispensable role. Bergquist (2006, p. 143) notes that “while language may be the transmitter of culture, we communicate our affiliations, identities, and belongingness first through food and foodways in profound and fundamental ways.” Migrant spatial hubs provide the security and familiarity of home by re-creating the homeland through shops and food venues and are thus as much historical as contemporary. They create a memory and present in the transformed landscape -- a social ambience for interaction with one’s own kind.

Establishing patterns of diasporic activities and flows draws attention to what migrants deem important and necessary. They establish spatial enclaves in the process of settlement which are most often associated with food and commensality. Because it answers important migrant needs, Filipina domestic workers converge not only for a day’s excursion in the mall with their friends,

but also to conduct transactions for their families and access desired services for themselves.<sup>280</sup>

While Christian churches and Lucky Plaza are sites for Filipino migrant gatherings, they are also sites for boundary distinctions. Migrant contestations in the church are implicitly manifested with membership clusterings. Some organisations have more expat members (like the CFC, Block Rosary, and *Opus Dei*) while others have more domestic worker members (for example, *El Shaddai* and Legion of Mary). Class distinction extends to ritual expressions. Despite a shared interest in the rosary as a ritual prayer, and a common iconic symbol, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Legion of Mary and Block Rosaries perform their own rituals differently in different venues, reflective of their contrasting classes and ways of living.

Lucky Plaza is a zone for contestation between two main groups in the diaspora, expressed by their presence and absence. Class identification is associated with day and time. Domestic workers go to Lucky Plaza on Sundays, during daytime hours, while the professional and skilled go there on weekdays or evening hours. In both instances, class identity is clearly

---

<sup>280</sup> Liebelt's (2011) study of Filipina domestic workers in Israel mentions their weekend gathering in a central bus station in Tel Aviv. Filipino clustering in public spaces has also been observed in Hong Kong by various scholars.

manifested and the spatial drawing of group boundaries achieved. Spatial inscription of identity among Filipinos also include the process of othering and boundary distinction among themselves. One's physical presence and the timing of Lucky Plaza visits not only reflect one's Filipino identity but also one's class status, and ultimately define one's social place, in terms of recognition and prestige or marginality in the diaspora. Thus, migrant enclaves reflect existing diasporic unities and divisions.

Migrant enclaves while providing a space for migrant identity construction have also inadvertently drawn visible spatial boundaries of distinction between migrants and host societies. The fear of being eased out of local space by those who 'do not belong' there has often provoked highly emotional local reactions to migrant presence. The representation and accommodation of the 'migrant other' in public spaces reflects and in turn reinforces dominant-subordinate, insider-outsider, self-other relations. Thus, "when Lucky Plaza becomes transformed into a 'Little Philippines' or 'Little Manila', the Singaporean is relegated to a minority position amidst a more dominant 'other,'" which among those proclaiming ownership of local landscapes and national domain is unacceptable (Yeoh and Huang 1998, p. 599). Diaspora identity construction and boundary distinction plays into the nationalist project as the undesired 'other,' even when obviously needed. Diaspora identity is therefore

juxtaposed against citizens and locals. Migrants' forays into the public domain are mostly tolerated, but never fully accepted. For the Filipina domestic workers, it is a 'double whammy' since they navigate in the private and domestic domains, where there are reminders of being 'other' everyday, with notable exceptions.

Sacred communion and secular fun are connected in the Filipino imagination. The connection between sacred and secular spaces among Filipinos in Singapore is indicated by weekly migrant movement from the church service to Lucky Plaza (Yeoh and Huang 1998, p. 598). This parallels the shift of hometown *fiesta* activities from the Church to the *feria*. While the church and the *feria* domains exist independently, the two are inseparable parts of the *fiesta* and are among Filipino cultural practices and observances that are being interpretively replicated into new areas of abode. This connection was also evident in New Zealand, in the celebration of the *Santacruzán* and the *Santo Nino-Siñulog fiestas*. This chapter has shown that culture is not fixed and reified but is changing and processual (Turner 1977, p. 63). Devotional rituals and traditions from migrant homelands go through a renaturalisation and localisation in migrant destination countries.

Transnational migration and diaspora challenges anthropology to look at the processes of cultural transborder crossings involving cultural and religious practices. It also challenges traditional notions of space and place linked to the discipline's most valued methodology of fieldwork where anthropologists go to the particular sites to find their subjects of study, meaning the 'natives' living in the place. There are ongoing debates regarding the future of anthropology, and its relevance in a fast changing world. As this chapter discussion has shown, following mobile subjects in mobile sites does not diminish the validity of classical anthropological insights into culture, religion, ritual and symbols, proving that anthropology's foundational interest on human beings, what they do, and how they live remain relevant in the postmodern world.

The following chapter looks at the transnational journey of popular devotional rituals through the ethnography of *Simbang Gabi* ritual among Filipinos in Singapore and is the final ethnographic chapter of the thesis.

## Chapter Nine

### Inscribing Filipino identity in Singapore

#### Introduction

*A ritual is not a journal or memoir. Its master narrative is more than a story told and reflected on; it is a cult enacted. An image of the past, even in the form of a master narrative, is conveyed and sustained by ritual performances.*

Connerton (1989, p. 70)

*[I]t may seem that few areas of cultural innovation have given rise to diversity comparable to that which we find in religion.*

Laidlaw and Whitehouse (2007, p.5)

This chapter continues the anthropological exploration of the role of religion in transnational migration and diaspora and is the last part of the ethnography of Filipinos in Singapore. It is also the final ethnographic chapter of the thesis. It thus wraps up the thesis's main proposition that religion through folk Christianity and *fiesta* celebrations is significant among Filipino migrants in New Zealand and Singapore. This chapter demonstrates for the final time that ritual is a force that creates a material and embodied bridge between home and diaspora, the performance of which requires the creation of organisational, material and emotional investment. These in turn connect Filipinos in the diaspora to one another in moments of effervescence and *communitas* while also capturing public space and asserting cultural presence in the diaspora. In this sense, I argue that religious ritual is the domain for the Filipino migrants' construction of community and inscription of identity overseas.

In the previous chapter I paid attention to the role of institutions in Filipino migration by outlining existing programmes facilitated and managed by faith-based and non-governmental organisations. I showed that Filipino migrant clusters and alliances are based on class, region and language, and, in the case of domestic workers, are also gender-based and spatially defined in churches and in Lucky Plaza. I noted that Lucky Plaza's migrant-oriented shops with Filipino names constitute spatial mnemonics of the Filipino homeland in the diaspora. I also pointed out that while migrant commercial enclaves such as Lucky Plaza gather migrants together in moments of celebration and fun, they are also sites of contestation, where boundaries are set: between host society and migrants, and among Filipinos, based on class -- between professional or skilled Filipinos and domestic workers. More importantly, I have highlighted the embeddedness of religion in Filipino migration and adaptation to Singapore by presenting migrant accounts of their religious dispositions and their reflexive interpretations of divine intervention through folk Christian terms such as *bahala na*, *kapalaran* and *swerte*. I also argued that the customary weekend flow from Christian churches to Lucky Plaza may be compared to the hometown *fiesta-feria* tradition of movement between ritual and secular celebration within a Filipino migrant imaginary. Both contexts invoke memories of a past 'home' while opening new spaces in which to cultivate friendships and networks in the present.



From the domain of customary migrant weekend practices and activities, this chapter moves to the Filipino migrant community's heightened performance of Christmas rituals. It is worth noting once again that the more than four centuries of annual *fiesta* celebrations in Philippine lowland localities makes the *fiesta* a powerful symbol of home, family, social relations and Filipino culture. By highlighting two annual Filipino Christmas celebrations that gather the most attendance and participation among Filipinos in Singapore -- a Pentecostal church's Christmas ritual, and the Catholic Church's nine-day Christmas preparation in the *Simbang Gabi* novena masses -- I demonstrate in the present chapter the importance of ritual and symbols among Filipino diasporans. I examine both churches' common use of a popular Filipino Christmas symbol, the *parol* (Christmas star) and its ideological significance in their rituals. At the same time, I will draw attention to the parallelisms of the *Simbang Gabi* novena masses with the hometown's sacral and secular connections in the *fiesta* proper and the *feria*.

Following the discursive framework of the Filipino rituals in New Zealand, this chapter engages symbolic and interpretive anthropology's theoretical discourse on culture, ritual and symbols to demonstrate how the discipline's insights gained through the study of a relatively stable pre-literate and pre-industrial peoples is relevant to contemporary understandings of ritual and

symbol among mobile Filipinos working in highly industrial sites such as Singapore. I show that the *fiesta* as imported and performed in the diaspora is both replicated and adapted by Filipinos in Singapore, similar to other places such as New Zealand, Canada and the United States. As a community celebration, the *prayer-feria* components follow a lineal movement from the liturgy and to the community meal that follow. I show in this chapter that migrant ritual celebrations are diasporic venues for: 1) homeland remembrance and socialization; 2) sacralization of space and place-making; 3) separation and boundary-making; 4) construction of community, identity, belonging; and 5) an experience of *communitas*. I highlight the observation that the migrant community's *Simbang Gabi* ritual simultaneously reflects Filipino social structure in terms of Church- state hierarchy; and anti-structure, in terms of the experience of community belonging and unity. On one hand, the *Simbang Gabi* ritual reflects the existing hierarchical structure, class distinction and cleavages among migrants while on the other hand, it allows migrants to experience community solidarity.

I show that religion as expressed and performed in the *Simbang Gabi* ritual provides an important locus where migrant religious dispositions and values are expressed, and Filipino identity is inscribed in the place of migration. Thus, the *fiesta* becomes the dominant Filipino identity marker in Singapore's

multi-cultural landscape. As an inherently religious event, the *fiesta* demonstrates religion's central role in Filipino transnational migration and diasporic adaptation.

### ***Simbang Gabi/Misa de Gallo fiesta in Singapore***

On my first fieldwork visit to Singapore in late July 2008, I had a brief meeting with the Filipino chaplain who good naturedly introduced me to some members of the Filipino community attending his chaplaincy masses scheduled that particular Sunday. In our few minutes of interaction before the ritual, he explained that Filipino chaplaincy masses have a regular roster and are celebrated in rotation every Sunday at different parish locations in Singapore to reach the many Filipino Catholics dispersed among the different residential areas of the island. He advised me to make sure to be in the city-state in December to see and experience the Christmas 'highlight' of Filipino migrant life in Singapore. Heeding his advice, I was in Singapore by mid-December for my final nine days of fieldwork in the city-state. After a five hour bus trip from Kuala Lumpur, I took a taxi during rush hour despite my meagre student budget<sup>281</sup> to make sure I arrived on time at a parish mass that I was attending for the first time. The taxi slowed down as it approached the block facing a heavy traffic flow of pedestrians and vehicles. As I prepared to

---

<sup>281</sup> There is a 35% metered fare peak hour surcharge from 7 am to 9:30 am and from 5 pm to 8 pm.

pay the fare, the driver, noticing the unusually large crowd assembling inside the parish compound asked in a surprised tone, “What is happening today? Why so many people? ” I paused to look at the crowd assembling inside the gate before managing to come up with a brief, polite answer, “Probably a concert,” thinking that another event may have coincided with the mass that I was attending. I joined the throng of humanity moving towards the gate and then the church door. Navigating between moving people was a problem, but it was even worse near the door, which was totally blocked by immobile bodies. Even the Singaporean ushers struggled to find walking space in the aisles of an SRO (Standing Room Only) Filipino crowd. As I tiptoed and peered from the back of the crowd unable to move further, I realised my mistaken response to the driver’s query. The crowd-puller was neither a concert nor a sports event, but the Christmas Filipino traditional ritual *Simbang Gabi* or *Misa de Gallo* (see the introductory discussion in chapter four, pp. 202-205). For a parish which ordinarily was not popularly frequented by Filipinos on ordinary Sundays, their unusually large turnout for a popular Christmas religious tradition was remarkable. That the centuries-old tradition had been brought by Filipino migrants to Singapore was even more fascinating for me, a Filipina, to witness the nightly ‘colonisation’ of church spaces and the cultural transmission of a Filipino Christmas tradition overseas. At the very least, the consistent attendance of thousands in the *Simbang Gabi* novena

masses provided clear evidence of religion's significance in mediating diaspora-homeland connections in the lives of Filipinos in Singapore in a similar manner that the *Santacruzán* and *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta* celebrations were significant to those in New Zealand.



Crowd interest and enthusiasm never wavered in the nine consecutive nights<sup>282</sup> of the novena masses in 2008, as thousands of Filipinos flocked to various Singapore Catholic parishes hosting the nightly novenas to experience the *Simbang Gabi* (fig. 9.1a). True to the Chaplain's information, the *Simbang Gabi* hosted and participated in by various Filipino communities in the diaspora was indeed the year's highlight. Each night of the novena was performed in a different venue to cover the main sections of the island, in order to give devotees wherever they lived an opportunity to attend at least one

<sup>282</sup>Some adaptations peculiar to the context of Filipinos in Singapore have been made. In recognition of the working hours of migrants, the *Simbang Gabi* or *Misa de Gallo* is held at eight o'clock in the evening instead of at dawn, and starts on the evening of December 15<sup>th</sup> instead of the traditional dawn of December 16<sup>th</sup> in the Philippines.

novena mass in a church within their residential district. All the choirs singing during the 2008 novena were Filipino choirs belonging to the local parishes sponsoring the event. A follow-up in 2010 showed almost the same number of *Simbang Gabi* novena attendees despite the fact that the ritual was being performed in three church locations simultaneously (fig. 9.1b) (in the 2009 programme, two masses were celebrated simultaneously). But more importantly, crowd convergence in the *Simbang Gabi* demonstrates the ritual's place-making and home-making effects in a foreign land. In this sense, the migrants' "swarming mass" and "intertwined paths ... weave place together" (De Certeau 1984, p. 96). Clearly, the very fact that thousands came for the *Simbang Gabi* every night demonstrates the importance of religious rituals among Filipino migrants as a mnemonic device of home and identity.

The *Simbang Gabi* is also open and ecumenical, in the sense that members of other Christian denominations may freely join the nine-day *fiesta* celebrations. On the third night of the novena masses, I met two Filipinos who were Evangelical Christians on the bus. They were attending the *Simbang Gabi* mass to lend their support to their Catholic friends who were members of the choir singing that night. Both were former Catholics but had been converted by one of the numerous cells of Filipino Christian Evangelical groups, which they estimated to number about thirty or more in Singapore. As former

Catholics they had no problem understanding the ritual, but their interest was more in the *fiesta* food and ambience of fellowship following the mass. The presence of non-Catholics in the *Simbang Gabi* masses points to the fluid boundaries among Christian denominations in the observance of a “Filipino tradition”. One reason, as I have pointed out previously, is that *fiestas*, such as the *Simbang Gabi* are part of the hometown culture. While Protestant converts denounce most Catholic traditions (such as the presence and veneration of icons and the prominent role of the Blessed Virgin Mary), they feel able to participate in community *fiesta* celebrations, a fact noted by Filipino anthropologists such as Jocano (1981) and Pertierra (1995; 1988). The ecumenical attitude towards the *fiesta* in Philippine localities is carried over to the diaspora indicating the centrality of the *fiesta* to collective homeland memory and a site for constructing the migrant community and its identity.

### **Filipino Christmas Symbols: the *Belen*, *Parol* and the Filipino home**

It is important at this point to introduce the significant symbols in popular lowland Philippines Christmas practices and the migrant rituals in Singapore. A popular representation of Christmas in predominantly Catholic Philippines is a nativity tableau called *Belen* -- the Spanish word for Bethlehem -- which depicts Jesus’s birth in the manger. The *Belen* displays iconic representations of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, and the infant Jesus in the crib,

surrounded by the shepherds, sheep, camels and the three Magi bearing the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Prominently displayed above the rooftop of the manger is a star, referred to as the ‘morning star’ in the gospel story of Matthew (Mt 2:1-12). The morning star in the manger scene is symbolically represented in the Philippines by the traditional *parol*, a five pronged star (fig. 9.2).



Through time the *parol* has undergone various permutations in design and materials and is no longer limited to five prongs. On the official religious level, the *parol* stands as a symbolic abstraction of the Christmas manger, the first home of the holy family according to tradition.



While the idyllic manger scene is present in most Catholic churches in the Philippines during the Christmas season, and is especially highlighted in the *Simbang Gabi* novena masses, other Christian churches on the whole are more subdued in their Christmas decorations, carefully avoiding any display of iconic symbols (such as Mary and the infant Jesus in the crib), except for the *Parol* or Christmas star.

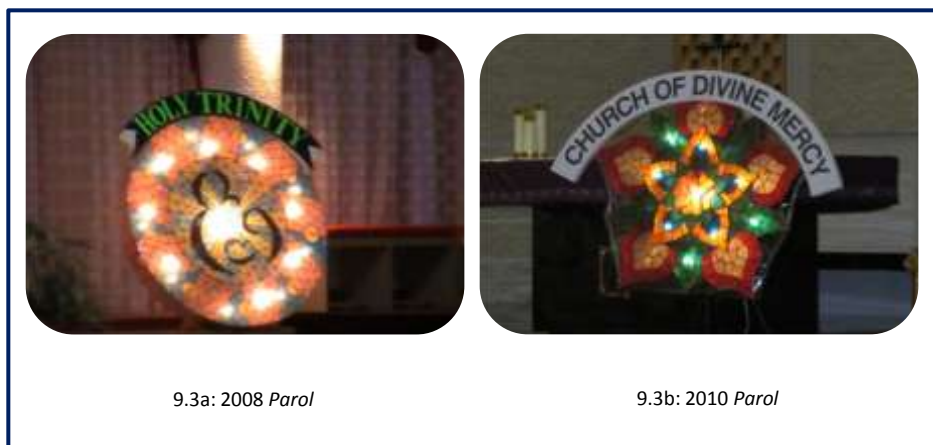
It is said that the Philippines has the longest Christmas celebration in the Christian world. Its celebration starts in September and lasts through the celebration of the Feast of the Epiphany (the Three Kings) in January. The practice of hanging a *parol* outside most Filipino homes indicates the beginning of the Christmas season. Yet, while the *parol* tradition hints at sacred origins and symbolism, the act of displaying a *parol* in the Filipino home is ordinary, casual, unplanned and uncoordinated. One hangs a *parol* outside one's home simply, without any ritual or prayerful incantations. No homeowner tells another to hang a *parol* in his or her house. And yet, as soon as one *parol* is hung outside a home, others immediately follow. *Parol* hanging has a contagious effect, its presence spreading from homes, villages, towns, districts and provinces to the whole nation. It is a ritualised behaviour practised by families, from the simplest to the richest. It encompasses businesses, from the small hawkers to the corporate giants of Ayala

Boulevard, Makati, the central financial district of the Philippines. It is present among Christian churches, from the smallest chapel to the biggest cathedrals, whether Catholic, Protestant Evangelical or Pentecostal. Because it is so popular and common, hardly anyone pays attention to the process of how it appears in the landscape, simply accepting that it is part of it.

The *parol* as a symbolic tableau of the birth and presence of the holy child in the home consequently highlights the importance of the Filipino family as an embodiment of the sacred. As such it gives deeper meaning to familial roles and relationships as well as the occasions where these are remembered and celebrated.

The *parol's* casual and latent function as precursor of the Christmas season in the Philippines contrasts with its role in the Singapore Filipino diaspora where it becomes a public ritual symbol. The *parol*, while a part of the nativity tableau near the altar, is not part of the liturgical ritual in the *Simbang Gabi* as it is ordinarily celebrated in most Philippine parishes. By contrast, in Singapore, it is carried to in the entrance procession, with each *Simbang Gabi* novena mass being borne by the representatives of the hosting Filipino community, and enthroned on a special elevated platform beside the altar (fig. 9.3a), with an arched banner bearing the name of the hosting parish placed

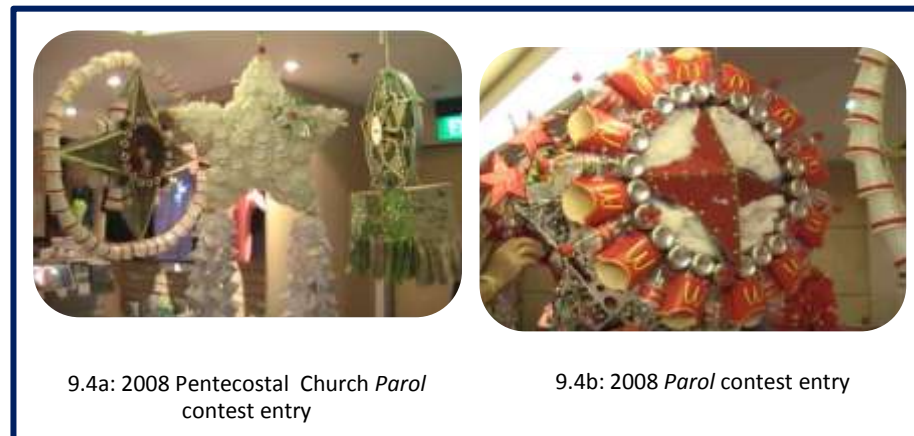
prominently on top. When I went back to Singapore in 2010, the *parol* was no longer included in the entrance procession, but continued to occupy a prominent place in front of the altar (fig. 9.3b).



The *parol* in Singapore's *Simbang Gabi* ritual can be seen as a representation of the Filipino home on two levels: on one level, as the symbol of the hosting parish it represents the diasporic 'home' of all Filipino migrants; on another level, it represents the diverse small communities which make up the composite Filipino diaspora in Singapore.

The *parol's* significance is not only limited to Filipino Catholics. It is also featured prominently in the Filipino Pentecostal community. A few weeks before Christmas 2008, the community held a *parol*-making contest among the different cell groups of the congregation. The contest was given the unique injunction to use recyclable rubbish as materials. The colourful *parols* made of

used soda cans, paper cups, and even egg cartons decorated the foyer of the church (fig. 9.4a, b).



During its Christmas worship service, after the readings and the pastor's sermon, the winning *Parol* entries were paraded in a procession signalling the beginning of the congregation's Christmas celebrations. The *parol* procession, including *parols* of various shapes and sizes, circled the congregation before going onto the stage. The winners were announced amidst joyful cheers. Afterwards Christmas carols were sung, led by the band, as the community cheered the birth of the Messiah-Saviour. In this sense, the *parol* as a symbol facilitates the Pentecostal community's heightened experience of Filipino Christmas. While there is no doubt that during the ritual there were many moments of 'energetic' community responses and collective effervescence (Durkheim 1915), as during the singing of hymns and the pastor's energetic sermon, the response to the *parol* procession surpasses them in significance

because the *parols* are mnemonic reminders of the Filipino Christmas landscape, and their presence in the community objectifies Filipino diasporic identity and connection to the homeland in a way that other parts of the ritual do not. The procession of Filipino homeland symbols inside a church in a foreign land is an act of diasporic identity inscription. That it happens in a religious ritual and venue again proves the point that religion is enmeshed in migrant lives, and thus plays a significant role in Filipino migration and diasporic adaptation in Singapore. At the same time, the ritual is also a marker of distinction from other migrant communities and from Singapore society. The Pentecostal ritual appears to have an all-Filipino audience, save for the Malaysian Pastor. In this sense, the ritual shows no evidence of host society representation as was the case for the Kiwi priest in the *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiesta* ritual in New Zealand. In terms of the *Sinulog* ritual, I have shown that while its performance reflects differences, it also simultaneously provides opportunities for the delineation of shared boundaries. In this case, boundary distinction and integration are not binaries but composite processes of transnational life. Werbner (2001, p. 745, 752) argues that migrants out of necessity set themselves apart socially and culturally because for them “culture is a crucial medium of transaction and ... of relatedness.” As I have stated, Filipino identity in New Zealand becomes leverage on the way to a desired hyphenated identity of Filipino-New Zealanders (see p. 349).

Skilled migrants in Singapore are better integrated into the receiving society for the obvious reason that they are allowed to become residents, marry residents or citizens, and to bring their families. Should they choose to, they could adopt a hyphenated identity. This option is closed to the unskilled. Thus, a hyphenated identity in Singapore is reflective of class and status. In the Catholic ritual, as will be shown later, the host society is visibly represented by Singaporean parishioners who act as ushers, welcoming the Filipinos to the parish in a show of hospitality. At the same time, they also manage the order in the seating arrangements. This coincidentally, if unconsciously, symbolises the Singaporean's state's efforts at openness and control.

As previously stated, symbols are polysemic or multivocal: they have a range of denotations and connotations and may also mean different things to different people at different times (Turner 1977). While the *parol* as a symbol continues to be held in common by Filipinos, it has acquired a different meaning and significance among Filipino migrants in Singapore, as shown by the Catholics' and Pentecostals' common use for the *parol* in their respective rituals while at the same time bestowing it with different forms of expressions and meanings. Protestants, Evangelicals and Pentecostal church communities ordinarily have an almost natural dislike of and suspicion for sacred icons and religious symbols except the cross. The *parol* as an abstraction of the manger

scene, which alludes to the same narrative, minus the idolatrous iconic objects, is an acceptable symbol of Jesus's birth among Pentecostals. For the Catholics it stands for the manger, the first holy home, and the hosting parish community of the novena masses. As such it expresses hospitality and welcome to all visitors of the new-born Saviour. For the Pentecostals it is a symbol that sets the tone for the Christmas carols and celebration that follows the liturgy. It allows them to remember the birth of Jesus Christ without the iconic representation they consider idolatrous. However, in both cases, the *parol* is a homeland symbol that helps construct community belonging and identity among Filipinos in Singapore while at the same time establishing connection to the sacred.

The *parol* as a Christmas symbol also stands as a reminder among migrant Filipinos that Christmas is a time for family homecoming for the tradition of *Noche Buena* (Spanish words literally meaning an evening which is good, but which has come to mean the Filipino traditional family meal after the Christmas midnight service). The *Noche Buena*'s importance is comparable to the Thanksgiving dinner among Americans because most Filipinos try their best to come home for the occasion. In this sense, the *parol* among migrant communities in Singapore stands for, or is a reminder of the familial and social dimensions of Christmas in the Filipino culture: meal fellowship, renewal of

family and kinship bonds, and community social interactions. As a symbolic expression of the Filipino family and home, the *parol* carries a profound poignancy in the Singapore diaspora because the majority of the Filipino migrants in Singapore are “homeless,” in both the literal and metaphorical sense. Domestic workers may be residing in their employers’ homes, but they cannot call it ‘home’. The space they occupy reminds them every day of their “otherness”, as most sleep in closet-sized rooms, near the kitchen and washroom, while others sleep on foldaway sofas in the living room (some even sleep on the floor). Filipino skilled workers are a bit better off. However, some, whose accommodation is not shouldered by the employing company, are at times forced to share flats and condominiums with other Filipinos to lessen living costs. Since en suite individual rooms cost more, many are forced to share rooms and bathrooms. Not having an exclusive living space means they lack privacy and have to construct the ambience of home with others.

### **Contestations and spatial positioning in the *Simbang Gabi***

Aside from the iconic symbols of Mary, Jesus and the *parol*, the *Simbang Gabi* novena masses also brings into focus the context of Filipino migration to Singapore. The plight of Filipina residents in FBO-run (Faith Based organizations) crisis centres is highlighted three times during the *Simbang Gabi* masses. First, at the beginning of each novena mass, after the entrance



procession, an announcement by the Filipino chaplain specifies the crisis centre and its women residents receiving the community's offerings and gifts. Second, during the prayer of the faithful (where the congregation prays for specific intentions), the priest invites the women to stand in front of the altar while the congregation prays for them. Finally, at the conclusion of the mass, the women come forward to take the community's offerings, and to receive the special blessing of the congregation. In the ritual, the women come to stand for all Filipino migrants who are facing difficulties or suffering the pain of separation from families, thus bringing into the community's awareness those on the margins of the migratory and settlement process; the cheated, exploited and abused Filipina domestic workers in Singapore and the rest of the world. In this sense, the *Simbang Gabi* ritual in Singapore attempts to be faithful to the prophetic stance of the Church in its solidarity with the poor. Semantically, the Filipino language manifests a strong orientation towards sociality and concern for another human being: *kapwa-tao* literally means "the same human being as myself." According to Enriquez (1986, p. 11) "*kapwa* is the unity of the self and others" in contrast with "others" in English which implies an opposition to and separation from the self. The worst person for Filipinos is one who is *walang kapwa-tao* or one who has no respect for another human being (ibid. p. 15). Jessica's narrative of inhumane treatment in Chapter Seven (see pp. 373-374) implies her employers' total lack of respect for another

human being or the absence of *pakikipagkapwa-tao*. The Filipino notion of mutual human respect “has profound implications” because it also demands acceptance and respect even in the face of unequal social roles, status or income (ibid. p. 16). Reflecting the community’s compassionate dispositions, the *Simbang Gabi* ritual includes the issue of justice which, while mostly considered a human rights and political issue, is also an ethical and moral concern. Pertierra (1988, p. 94) notes that rituals “conceptually set frameworks for thinking and feeling as well as constraints and channels for actions.” The *Simbang Gabi*’s prayers for the marginalised among them allow the community to claim the privilege of spiritual authority and to create the social state of solidarity with the victims to effect change in their lives. The notion of solidarity or *pakikiisa* is the highest form of *pakikipagkapwa-tao* or self identification with others. In the foregrounding discussion of *fiesta* as ritual, the self-referencing and contextual qualities of ritual were mentioned. These are illustrated in the novena ritual’s inclusion and acceptance of migrant needs; one of them, a more humane treatment from Singaporean employers. It is important to remember at this point that the experience of otherness and discrimination has also been a part of the Filipino narratives in New Zealand. One may say that on account of the diaspora’s marginal status in most host societies, moral distancing occurs.

In addition, while *Simbang Gabi* enables Filipinos in Singapore to come together, it has implicit ideological and social functions in highlighting the risks of migration through its acknowledgment of crisis centre residents. Thus the social efficacy of ritual and the “satisfaction” it produces depends on its use of symbolic representation and action while keeping implicit its “cognitive, affective, and technical claims” (Pertierra 1988, p. 95). On another level, the Filipinos’ drive for better pay does not obscure their seeking of community and sociality, which includes the care and concern for other members of the migrant community. This comes out repeatedly as a major strength of the Filipino diaspora despite existing class boundaries and divisions.

The *Simbang Gabi* is also part of folk Catholicism which sees ritual as efficacious in the believer’s life. Estela, a Filipina seated beside me in one of the novena masses, told me (when asked) that she has always been a church-goer to Quiapo (which is the shrine of the Black Nazarene) and that Filipinos go to church because it is part of Filipino ‘tradition’ (*kaugalian*). She explains:

Almost all (Filipinos) are really church goers. Others have their own intentions because they have the belief that if they finish the *Simbang Gabi* (nine nights) their wish will come true... Because any difficulty, this is ... because it’s not easy to survive here in Singapore. Our families seem to think that we are just picking money here when they ask for money or support from us... Because we are in a different country, that is (our belief) ... for

me... that is our ultimate weapon, our faith in God... That no matter what happens, no matter what difficulties in life [the use of *unos* and *bagyo* refers to life's problems rather than the literal meaning of typhoon and hurricane] if you have faith in God (*Kanya*, reference to God which could be masculine or feminine) and you believe... Luckily that is what I am thankful for because our company was not very affected by the economic crisis (in 1997-98). That is why my faith has increased.<sup>283</sup>

Estela has taken part in the *Simbang Gabi* to thank God for the protection given to the company she worked for during the financial crisis for ten years, indicating that her commitment to the ritual may come from a *panata* or vow. Geertz (1957, p. 422) recognises “the power of the symbol ... its comprehensiveness ... its fruitfulness in ordering experience.” In performance, Turner (1986, p. 98) states:

At every moment, and especially in the redressal of crises, the meaning of the past is assessed by reference to the present and, of the present by reference to the past; the resultant “meaningful” decision modifies the group's orientation to or even plans for the future, and these in turn react upon its evaluation of the past. Thus the apprehension of the meaning of life is always relative, and involved in perpetual change.

Participants in a ritual reconstruct themselves as “part of an ongoing social process” by expressing and reliving experiences to make them meaningful (McAllister 2012, p. 19) in their present context. For Estela, the *Simbang Gabi* addresses human concerns, especially their difficulties and trials, by mediating migrant supplications for favours and expressing gratitude for those that have been granted.

---

<sup>283</sup> Original in Appendix B Chapter 9.1

An interesting twist in the *Simbang Gabi* ritual in 2008 was that it coincided with the change of diplomatic leadership in the Philippine embassy. A new ambassador had just been assigned to Singapore, who, from all indications, was also a very devout Catholic. The Filipino chaplain invited the ambassador and her family to the nightly novena masses, to be introduced to the various Filipino church communities. In between the communion and the final blessing, she was invited by the Chaplain to give a five or ten minute speech introducing herself and important information about embassy services and programmes for migrants, including its support for the FWRC (Foreign Workers Resource Centre) and the women's crisis centres. In an unplanned and unintentional way, the ritual highlighted the main power players in the diaspora -- the Chaplaincy and the Philippine state's official representative in Singapore, the diplomatic corps. During the nine-day novena masses, there were two agendas presented to the community, the moral and spiritual provided by the chaplain; and the political and legal explained by the ambassador. After a few nights following this pattern, the ambassador jokingly remarked at the beginning of her speech, "And now, I am going to give the second homily." The ambassador's post-communion speeches may be coincidental to the ritual, but they do bring into the open the fractious yet intimate relationship between Church and State in the Philippines. The combination of the chaplain's homily and the ambassador's speech indicate

that the partnership and collaboration between the two historical sources of leadership and power in the Philippine context, the Church and the State, have been transplanted into and expressed in the diaspora.

Because of the large crowd, finding a seat throughout the nine day novena was a problem. On some nights, especially for those assigned to churches with smaller church grounds, just finding a place to stand posed a formidable challenge. On account of the previous night's experience of not being able to set foot inside the church for the ritual even though I arrived thirty minutes before the mass, I decided to come to the church two hours earlier the next night just so I could get in and perhaps find a front row seat. I was surprised to find a significant number of Filipinos already at the church waiting for it to open. The church opened an hour later and I joined the rush among the early comers to find a seat. The front rows were off limits as reserved signs were posted on at least the first two pews nearest the altar steps. After finding a seat in the third pew, I looked around and realised that most of those waiting with me were "advance" reservation parties for their family and friends who were to come later. As soon as they found a seat, they started placing 'reservation markers' (bags, umbrellas, and other personal effects) on the seats beside them to indicate that the space was reserved. Those who came just a few minutes later could no longer find seats even when technically there were still many

vacant seats. One Singaporean usher, visibly irritated, told some of those reserving the seats that unoccupied seats will be given to people standing at the back if they remained unoccupied five minutes before the mass. However, the reserved seats for the ambassador's family and embassy staff, as well as those for the event organisers and their families, remained glaringly unoccupied until almost the very start of the mass for most of the novena nights. These reserved front seats left others without seats no matter how punctually they arrived for the mass. The Church space therefore, like Lucky Plaza, is also a zone for spatial separations which begin even before the ritual starts. Seat reservations, claims and positionings expose both class distinctions and social networks in the diaspora. While the notion of *kapwa* is strong, it is even stronger for family members and for those in the same social circles.

On one occasion, the ambassador and her family came a few minutes after the mass had begun and caused a minor disruption as they struggled to pass through the crowded side entrance. Previously, a minute before the mass started, the ushers, noting that the reserved seats meant for the diplomats were still unoccupied, and thinking they would not come, allowed those standing nearby to sit in them. By the time the VIPs eventually entered the church their seats were already occupied. Some of the Filipino organisers frantically approached the seat occupants and started negotiating with them to give up

their seats for the diplomats.<sup>284</sup> Fortunately, the priest, noticing what was happening in the front row, acted quickly to avert a potentially embarrassing situation. He invited the VIP latecomers to sit on either side of him at the altar. In church liturgical rubrics, the seats behind the altar table are normally reserved for the priest presiding over the mass, clerical ritual concelebrants, deacons and altar servers. The resulting seating on the elevated dais of the altar -- of the priest as the representative of the Catholic Church flanked on both sides by the two ambassadors and their daughter (she is married to another ambassador) who are representatives of the nation-state overlooking the rest of the faithful seated in the pews, portrayed the status hierarchy in the *Simbang Gabi*, one ironically reminiscent of colonial times. Connerton (1989, pp. 73-74) tells us:

We know what it means when one person sits in an elevated position; when everyone around them stands; when one person stands and everyone else sits; when everyone in a room gets up as someone comes in; when someone bows, or curtsies, or, in extreme circumstances, falls to their knees before another who remains standing.

Bloch (1977, p. 289) defining social structure as “a legitimate order of inequality” argues that ritual communicates the inequality of social structure “of the past in the present.” The close and intimate connection between the

---

<sup>284</sup> Space problem was not as acute in 2010 as in the 2008 masses since there were three masses, but reserved seats for VIPs continued to be provided. On the second night, the front pews were immediately occupied by the early comers. A few minutes before the mass, a Filipina usher came to negotiate with those already seated to transfer to nearby vacant seats. A reserved sign was hastily placed on the front pew as they were leaving. A few minutes later the diplomats came to the seats. Immediately after the mass, before anyone could approach the altar, the reserved signs were removed indicating some awareness of adverse reaction to seat reservations.



Church and state that began in the colonial period continues up to the present in Philippine localities and in the Singapore Filipino diasporic community. As previously mentioned, this connection is spatially manifested in most Philippine town centres' lay out, wherein parish churches and town administration buildings are located either face-to-face or as adjacent to one another. This spatial arrangement is not a fixed structure of domination but of "competing realms" between church and civil administration regarding the exercise of power and authority over their geographic subjects, the *tao* or ordinary townspeople (Ileto 1998, p. 81). I have also previously proposed that competing positionalities are carefully orchestrated so as not to invite any challenge to the status quo of structural dominance over the Filipino masses. Thus, in church rituals, priestly leadership is affirmed and respected by local elites. The priest is seated in an elevated and prominent seat near the altar, and local elites are seated in reserved seats in the front pews reflective of their political and economic status. In contrast, in civic rituals like the Independence Day, local political elites take the centre stage, performing the public ceremony of raising the national flag, while priests take on the supporting role as spiritual leaders by leading people to prayer. This power sharing among the elites is thus spatially and gesturally manifested. Among Filipinos in Singapore, it is especially visible in the *Simbang Gabi* ritual. In this particular

mass, the intimate connection is made even more explicit spatially by the close seating arrangements, though coincidental, of the power brokers.

The close relations between Church and state were further strengthened by the priest's homily that night that played on the imagery of the Philippines as mother country (*Inang Bayan*) and the ambassador as the "mother" of all Filipinos in Singapore.<sup>285</sup> The appeal to the 'mother trope' once again demonstrates the importance of the feminine in the Filipino culture. I have previously mentioned the matrifocality of Philippine lowland cultures (see pp. 189, 193, 207), and alluded to the virgin Mary's religious and national significance as a rallying symbol of a loving mother at two crucial historical moments, the victory against the Dutch Protestant invaders in 1646, and the EDSA People's Power Revolution in 1986 (see pp. 208-209 ). In this particular *Simbang Gabi* novena night, the symbolic power of the mother is once again played out, this time connecting it to the migrant imagery of *Inang Bayan* or motherland. The reference to the ambassador as the 'mother of Filipinos in Singapore' joins the array of feminine symbolic representations of *Maganda* in Filipino culture that are enmeshed in the Filipino language, family, notions of motherhood, patriotic imaginings of motherland and affective regard for Mary as the 'holy mother' of humankind.

---

<sup>285</sup> Each novena night has a theme and the theme for that particular mass happened to be the Filipino Family.

The spatial allocation in Singapore's *Simbang Gabi* mirrors the context of most Philippine parishes where there are always available seats for the recognised social, economic and political leaders of the community such as the Mayor, Governor, Council members, and other VIPs (composed mostly of generous Church donors). Taken within the Philippine context, the chaplain's special treatment of the ambassador was not unusual. Most priests in the Philippines frequently rub shoulders with the rich, famous and powerful such as businessmen, celebrities, politicians and government officials.

Since the actual appropriation of space in the *Simbang Gabi* was not un-Filipino, acquiescence from the Filipino community was therefore expected if not a given. In this case, it was not. It was surprising to hear little grumblings of protest even from those comfortably seated. Agreeing with the whispers of protests around her, a woman seated nearby, Vanessa, gave a passing remark or *pasaring/parinig* in Filipino, a practice usually aimed at correcting unacceptable behaviour without naming any offender (a face-saving mechanism because no one is named):

There are those who come very early to get a seat... there are those who get angry when they don't have seats... Those people at the front are special people... If I am the one asked to vacate my seat for them, I will be angry. I will not agree (to leave the seat). We are all equals who come to church. Not because they are from the Philippine embassy that you are asked to stand... They should fall in line because when we go to the embassy, we fall in line.

Anyone who is late should stand. If she is late she should stand.  
Now, they are late, they should stand. Why do they think they are  
so important?<sup>286</sup>

As previously mentioned, a popular perception among Filipinos in Singapore is of the Philippine embassy staff's general condescending attitude towards migrants. In apparent reference to the marginal treatment of Filipino nationals in their embassy, Greg, a 'homeboy' of mine (cited on p. 355), had previously asked me during coffee, "Have you been to the Philippine embassy? You should see how Filipinos are treated there!"<sup>287</sup> It does not help that the embassy's limited space lacks a comfortable ambience compared to Asia's other more developed states. Liza (see pp. 365-367), acknowledged the "strained relationship" between ordinary Filipino migrants and the embassy staff. One point of irritation was the simple task of providing information. She noted that embassy personnel required migrants to go to the embassy just to get simple information. According to her, various migrants have observed that "when one calls (for information) they will not give you a direct answer."<sup>288</sup> Thus, they are forced to return twice, first to get a list of requirements, and then for the actual application. Because of this, most do not think that the embassy staff has Filipino migrant interests at heart. To make matters worse, the embassy's migrant schedule of activities is seen as not "DH friendly"

---

<sup>286</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 9.2

<sup>287</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 9.3

<sup>288</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 9.4

because they are usually held on weekdays when the domestic workers are working.<sup>289</sup> Charlie (from my hometown) laments that “they (embassy officials) only have jobs because of us (Filipino migrants) but they do not treat us (migrants) well.”<sup>290</sup> It is important to point out that migrants in general were aware of the embassy’s diplomatic function and its responsibility to inform and remind them of Philippine migration policies and rules, but some insisted that this could be done by embassy staff in a manner cognisant of their dignity as human beings and citizens of the state, and not, as some claim, in a patronising manner. Again, we see here the importance of *pakikipagkapwa* or the recognition and respect for human beings among migrants. Sammy pointed out that:

They really scold the people there as if they are children incapable of understanding and they are made to wait a long time in uncomfortable seats in cramped conditions. They think too highly of themselves.<sup>291</sup>

It must be noted that the Filipino word *mapagmataas* also means condescending or discriminatory,<sup>292</sup> and closely associated with *matapobre* a word referring to the elite’s discriminating attitude towards the poor in Filipino folklore, which runs counter to *kapwa-tao*’s notion of equal human respect. While the Chaplain rightfully believed that the Filipino community needed to

---

<sup>289</sup> The popular Filipino slang for Domestic Workers is DH, short for Domestic Helper.

<sup>290</sup> Original text in Appendix B Chapter 9.5

<sup>291</sup> Original in Appendix B Chapter 8.6

<sup>292</sup> The root word of *mapagmataas* is *taas*, which means to put up above, or elevate.

know their government representative in Singapore, it also revealed some existing resentments. Turner (1969, p. 25) notes the contradictions between the ideological principles and practice of Ndembu ritual:

We are told that the milk tree represents the close tie between mother and daughter. Yet the milk tree separates the daughter from her mother. We are also told that the milk tree stands for the unity of Ndembu society. Yet we find that in practice it separates women from men, and some categories and groups of women from others.

In this sense, while the *Simbang Gabi* ritual strives to create community harmony and solidarity, inherent contradictions, conflicts and contestations are also revealed, and in this case, even highlighted.

Migrant critique of the seating entitlements expected by public figures of authority signifies the beginning of a new consciousness among some as a result of migration. As migrants move out of the Philippine context, they are released, even if temporarily, from the usual family and social roles and responsibilities corresponding to their class and status bequeathed to them by their home communities and culture. McAllister (2012, p. 37) notes that ritual participation effects reflexivity which allows for reflection and commentary on social values and categories “for a regeneration or re-ordering as well as a questioning of social relationships.” Away from home in the Singapore diaspora, migrants enjoy a newfound freedom from their class-based roles.

Their new state of freedom allowed a few of them to question and challenge, that particular night, what in the past they had accepted as “givens” of being Filipinos/Filipinas. Experiences of marginalisation by the host society and by the homeland’s diplomatic representatives offer some migrants a space for reflexive evaluation which allows them to confront their acceptance of discrimination at home and overseas. In a sense, ritual’s symbolic contradictions provide transformational possibilities for the future.

### **Food Commensality in the *Simbang Gabi Fiesta***

The importance of food and its connection to culture and society have been noted by various anthropologists. Richards ([1932] 2004, p. 1-2; 14) the first anthropologist to draw attention to the importance of food, points out:

The impulse to seek food is ... a desire that cannot be inhibited or repressed ... It cannot be denied fulfilment, as can the sex impulse, throughout the course of the individual’s life... The individual man can exist without sexual gratification, but he must inevitably die without food... It is an insistent human want, occurring regularly at short intervals, and shared by the whole community alike.

Mintz (2008, p. 513) draws attention to the impact of food preparation to the development of culture, stating, “Before we became the animal that cooks, we were, like the rest of life, animals that had to eat. Our history as eating animals changed profoundly when we became cooking animals.” Mary Douglas (1972, pp. 61-62, 66) connects food to the degree of intimacy in social relations:

Eating, like talking, is patterned activity... Drinks are for strangers, acquaintances, workmen, and family. Meals are for family, close friends, honoured guests. The grand operator of the system is the line between intimacy and distance. Those we know at meals we also know at drinks. The meal expresses close friendship. Those we only know at drinks we know less intimately.

I have shown the importance of food among Filipino migrant communities in New Zealand and their recreation of the *fiesta* ambience through food commensality in small circles and networks. I have also drawn attention to the importance of Lucky Plaza as a foodway among migrants in Singapore. This section shows the connection between food and ritual and their important patterning of the Filipino value of *pakikipagkapwa-tao* in social relations. The *Simbang Gabi*'s community meal attempts to replicate the ambience of hospitality in Filipino homes during *fiestas* where all, even the stranger, are welcome.



9.4a: 2008 *Simbang Gabi* meal



9.4b: 2010 *Simbang Gabi* Meal



The Filipino community living in the parish hosting a novena mass are responsible for the services as well as for the logistics of the *fiesta* feast that follows. This is a most daunting task considering that about five to ten thousand Filipinos troop to different parish churches of the City State every night for the *Simbang Gabi* masses. The 2008 *fiesta* menu was kept simple. Mass attendees were treated to *arrozcaldo* (rice soup with chicken innards) and drinks (mineral water or tetra packed juice). A few better off parishes also offered *pancit* (noodles). One parish offered rice and vegetable viands. Except for the drinks, *arrozcaldo* and *pancit* are two of the popular breakfast dishes after the *Simbang Gabi* among mass attendees in the Philippines. Notwithstanding the menu's simplicity, the crowd enthusiastically lined up for the *fiesta* meal (see fig. 9.5a, b). Most had come in their small groups and social circles to enjoy meal fellowship after the mass.

Towards the end of the novena masses the crowd grew even larger. From the seventh night onwards according to a participant's crowd estimate, the number probably exceeded ten thousand. There was almost no room to move in the church compound, and reaching the door became next to impossible. The host parish provided large TV screens outside so people unable to get inside the church could still participate in the novena mass. To lessen the pressure of feeding so many people in a short time, one hosting parish decided to serve

food two hours before the mass for the early comers. However, even with this wise intervention, the queue for the *fiesta* food continued for hours after the mass.

According to Fernandez (1986, p. 21) “food punctuates” Filipino life as a “touchstone” for “memories” of important events. Christmas, for example, is remembered for the food prepared and consumed. Food, “[l]ike all culturally defined material substances used in the creation and maintenance of social relationships,” Mintz (2002, p. 109) argues, “serves both to solidify group membership and to set groups apart.” In this case, the community feast that follows the ritual is a *communitas* moment. Here the structure of inequality disappears and the community shares a moment of equality. Food is also a “socially defined phenomenon of sharing which fosters goodwill and friendship” (Eriquez 1986a, p. 2) in the spirit of *pakikipagkapwa-tao*. Thus it is a “measure” of “relationships” among co-human beings (Fernandez 1986, p. 21). Food as an indispensable part of Filipino *fiestas*, figures not just as a tool of renewing familial ties but also as an effective agent in fostering community solidarity. In this sense *fiesta* food mediates and merges family and community. Rituals, according to Turner (1973, p. 208) stress the general good that extends social relations:

[I]ndividual responsibility is now extended from the domain of immediate kin and neighborhood relations in localized normative systems to that of the generic human “brother” and the “neighbour” who might be anyone in the wide world but whom one should “love.” The “other” becomes a “brother”; specific siblingship is extended to all who share a system of beliefs.

In the feasting in the *handa* table, human beings share with each other, including strangers, or ‘others,’ God’s bounty. In addition, the celebration also connects the social and religious, in time and space. In the *fiesta* ritual people enter into a sacred communion with God and the holy patron while in the *feria* social interactions and enjoyment, people forge and strengthen kin and affinal relations. Food figures significantly in both the religious ritual (in the table of the Eucharistic offering and sacrifice) and *handa* (in the table of *fiesta* food). The flow or movement is from the sacred table to the social meal. The *Simbang Gabi*’s inclusion of a meal is significant, because, according to Lynch ([1984] 2004, p. 211-212):

By this very fact of bringing people together the Christmas religious celebrations stimulate community solidarity... Reference is to the customary gatherings in the church patio or the plaza after the *misa de gallo*, and to the family repast after the Christmas midnight mass. The general mixing in the first instance makes for stronger community feelings ... while the second custom – that of *noche buena*, or *media noche* – strengthens family ties. In both cases the religious gathering becomes the context of the social.

The intersubjective unity and solidarity between heaven and earth is symbolically performed at the ritual table (during the mass) and the *handa*

table (in the food commensality following the ritual). In the first instance, God allows human mortals to partake of his sacred meal, in the process including humans in his supernatural realm, strengthening sacred-human relations. Thus, the *fiesta* highlights religion in what Orsi (2005, p.2) refers to as an intersubjective web of relations “between heaven and earth involving humans of all ages and many different sacred figures together”.

### **Summary and conclusion**

Singapore’s largely Confucian society, known for its discipline and work ethic, is regularly suspended (or subverted) one day each week, on Sundays, and seasonally each year, for nine consecutive days before Christmas, by Filipino migrants during the *Simbang Gabi* novena masses as they troop to Christian churches to create the *fiesta*’s “chaotic” space, a temporary space of “disorder” in the ‘manicured’ and “orderly” society of Singapore. Filipino enclaves as well as other migrant enclaves are reminders that Singapore’s renowned prosperity founded in the Confucian ethic of discipline and hard work is no longer solely the work of Singaporeans, but to a greater degree is upheld by foreign workers, including the unwanted but most needed lowly paid unskilled labourers and domestic workers, a significant number of whom are Filipinos.

In particular, there are important themes surrounding the family and folk Christian devotions that emerge in the process of Filipino migration and diaspora settlement. The family emerges as the main motivation and enabling agent of Filipino migration and settlement. In addition, individual devotional practices and community ritual performance point to the use of symbolic representation of the family. The rosary, the *parol*, and the *Simbang Gabi* ritual are all home symbols that bring out the powerful significance of home to the diaspora, but even more so, the diaspora's living connection to the family. In addition, the Church, as a historical religious and social domain, is a significant symbol of home in the migrant imagination. The context of migrant strangerhood and marginality within the host culture makes the church a symbolic representation of home and as well as a refuge. And as the home of sacred icons of devotions and remembered homeland traditional rituals, the church mediates the migrant's home memory of the past and the home longed for in the future even as his/her actual home had been reconfigured by migration. In the diaspora, it is a place to meet and cultivate relationships in a newfound substitute 'family,' and a place of rest from long hours of labour and the demands of employers. But most of all, the church is a place to connect with the sacred, the God who understands a believer, and who helps her bear her burdens. This is not, however, about a faith that engenders passivity, but a faith that impels action. For the Filipino migrants in Singapore in a state of

homelessness, going to church provides the embodied connection to the idealised notion of homecoming to family, not the longing for territorial return to the nation that stands as a source of hope and joy.

Participation in the *Simbang Gabi* continues a long-held tradition performed with family and friends in the homeland. The ritual's re-enactment in Singapore reinvents the *fiesta*'s historical memory to fit a new transnational context. The general flow of Filipino migrants from Sunday church to Lucky Plaza follows a pattern of behaviour they have performed back home many times before in the hometown *fiesta* and may therefore be seen as a form of ritualised behaviour where "meaning comes to be ascribed" to a patterned performance "symbolic of that meaning" (Torren 2006, p. 195). I suggest that Sunday Mass attendance and Lucky Plaza excursion and meeting with friends have become for most Filipina domestic workers the nearest possible thing to the hometown *fiesta* outings that can be re-enacted on Singaporean soil. One may say based on this that on a weekly basis, every Sunday, and annually, at Christmas in the *Simbang Gabi* novena masses, Filipinos metaphorically 'go home' and 'transplant home' in the diaspora imaginatively in their performance of the Filipino *fiesta*.

I have also argued that the *fiesta* is lowland Philippines' dominant form of cultural celebration that contains key homeland dominant symbols among Filipinos in New Zealand and Singapore. I have demonstrated that as a celebration, it allows the community to move between the dual modes of ritual and play, and the ideological and orrectic poles of meaning, from ritual to feasting. It is worth noting that the experience of being a solidary community occurs at various times in the ritual. For the Pentecostals, it occurs during the *parol* procession. Among the Catholics, while the ritual demonstrates cleavages, community solidarity is achieved in the prayers for the residents of the women crises centres, and the food commensality that follows the liturgy.

Once again, the sacred icons of Mary and Jesus in the manger play a significant role in the liturgy. However, the *parol* which stands for the holy family's Bethlehem home, attains symbolic significance in the ritual among migrant Filipinos in Singapore beyond its normative relevance in Philippine landscapes. Considering that ritual is processual, according to (Turner 1977a, p. 63) changes and transformations do occur, including the dominant symbol's sheddding and gaining of *signata* over time (Turner 1975, p. 156). Among the Catholics, the need to represent the parish community that plays host to the multitude has given rise to the emergence of the *parol* as symbol of Filipino hospitality. Among the Pentecostals, the need to remember the homeland

landscape devoid of idolatrous icons has made the *parol* a mnemonic representation of the holy home and its holy dwellers,<sup>293</sup> and the migrant home in the motherland.

The role of the mother is again reprised in the ritual in one particular night wherein the priest referred to the ambassador's role as representative of the state as that of 'mother' of the Filipinos in Singapore, a reference disputed by migrant narratives and some spontaneous reactions from participants within the ritual. In this sense, unequal power relations may be seen as part of Philippine society, but the experiences of exploitation from Singaporean employers coupled with what they see as condescension from state employees of their plight have contributed to an emergent 'third realm' (of resistance), to borrow Iletto's (1998, p. 85) term (see pp.137-138), among the common *tao* overseas. Ritual participation facilitates reflexivity that challenges existing conditions and allows the possibility of change. Finally, while the ritual shows cleavages and divisions, it is also able to foster solidarity and unity, because despite existing inequalities, the respect for the humanity of others in *pakikipagkapwa-tao* finds reinforcement in ritual participation.

---

<sup>293</sup> Jesus' birth in the manger has powerful parallel meanings to the migrant state. His parents were temporary migrants in Bethlehem where he was born. Later, his parents took him to Egypt and became refugees to escape Herod's wrath. .



I have mentioned that Christian churches have seen an increase in membership and activity due to migration. In general, there has been a patterning of Church services, and spatiality in response to migrant needs. For example, the Pentecostal church is strategically near the migrant hub. In the case of the Catholic Church, its pastoral imperatives (like ACMI) and FBOs are designed to help and support migrants. It has initiated joint programmes with the Philippine state to provide interventions and skills training programmes. The much touted economic windfall of transnational migration in the form of migrant remittances is ultimately founded on the migrants' ethical and moral commitments to their family, and notions of reciprocity. As Orsi has argued (2003, p. 172), religion is embedded in human actions, relationships, and the way participants imagine the world to be, and thus cannot be isolated from everyday life. In this sense, scholarly discourse on Filipino transnational migration cannot simply be restricted to a purely 'economic' perspective, because migration for Filipinos is enmeshed with the sacred. In both New Zealand and Singapore, the interconnection between religion, migration and diaspora has been repetitively demonstrated: the devotional ritual and prayers asking the holy patrons for visa approval and good jobs, the ethical and moral responsibility of sending remittances to the family, attachment to sacred icons and symbols, church attendance and ritual participation in the diaspora. Among Filipinos, migration is not just economic, it is also religious. Religion

and the sacred economy it generates provides an understanding of the Filipino migrants' exercise of agency, ethical and moral commitments to the family, risk-taking, resiliency, religiosity, attachment to sacred icons, church attendance, ritual participation, and community feasting.

Werbner (2005, p. 546) asserts that the place of diaspora is "a historical location, not merely an abstract, metaphorical space," which needs "to be grasped as specifically located, deterritorialized communities [in which diasporans] imagine themselves, despite their dispersal, as sharing a collective past and common destiny, and hence also a simultaneity in time." At the same time, diasporas are chaorders which develop and are reproduced transnationally in predictable cultural organisational forms, materially and imaginatively but yet are autonomous of any command centre even if they acknowledge the homeland through the performance of certain obligations (ibid. pp. 545-546). The Filipino diasporic community in Singapore follows the predictable pattern of older Filipino diaspora communities in the United States where the increase of migrants results in home and place-making practices oriented towards identity maintenance and inscription. But at the same time it is also unique because its creation of a Filipino landscape in Singapore is achieved by its highly transient members, the unskilled Filipina domestic workers, rather than the more or less permanent Filipino permanent

residents. Unskilled migrants need to renew their visas every two or three years. Some come back or find other destinations, or simply go home. But while membership turnover exists, the spatial footprints from churches to Lucky Plaza left behind by unskilled migrants are followed by new ones, even as they create their own stories of the walk. According to De Certeau (1984, p. 5), “[t]he approach to culture begins when the ordinary man (sic) *becomes* the narrator, when it is he who defines the (common) place of discourse and the (anonymous) space of its development.” The Filipino diasporic place in Singapore continues to be narrated by the footsteps of the Filipina domestics, the common *tao* overseas, developed within the anonymous spaces of their resilience.

## Chapter Ten

### Summary and conclusion

#### An interpretive approach to religion, migration and diaspora

*Religious movements - and religion in general - have never respected international boundaries.*

Werbner 2004, p. 897

*In the hurly-burly of social life, events are not so neatly ordered. Their causal arrangement is the product of analysis rather than of history itself: it is the observer's deconstruction, and reconstruction, of social process.*

Cohen 1987, p. 9

*[O]f all the disciplines deployed in studying globalization, migration and mobility, none are better equipped to capture the complexities of such social realities than an ethnographic analysis.*

Hage 2005, p. 474

The thesis, as stated at the beginning, is an anthropological exploration of the role of religion in Filipino transnational migration and diaspora. The ethnographic discussions have drawn attention to three distinct and related phenomena; religion, transnational migration and diaspora. I have proposed that Filipino folk Christianity and devotional rituals provide the social, cultural and psychological support in the migration process, and the basis for the Filipino migrants' construction of identity and community overseas.

Clearly, the interaction between religion, transnational migration and diaspora is complex. And because of this, a "catch-all" theoretical slant to fuse the thematic content may be presumptuous, even simplistic. The thesis draws from

a variety of disciplines, from religious studies, sociology, geography and anthropology, to form a coherent account of a migrant community's experience of diasporic life. It attempts to make sense of Filipino migrants' homeland remembrance and home-making practices, the role of folk Christian dispositions, their affective regard for sacred symbols and icons, spatial clusterings and gatherings in church spaces, and community celebrations of ritual and feasting. But while I make use of these strands, the ethnographic analysis clearly leans on anthropology's interpretive approach in its analysis of the Filipino migrant's understanding of subjectivity, family and ritual celebrations. My aim has been to gather relevant cultural strands, to view Filipino migrant experiences not as constituted by disparate, fragmented experiences, but rather, as a tapestry of woven symbols and meanings that shape migrant diasporic life, even as they themselves continuously shape their own experiences. It is in this sense that I have borrowed the holistic paradigm of a "lived religion" from religious studies (Orsi 2003, p. 172) to argue that religion is enmeshed in Filipino migrants' lived diasporic experience, in their exercise of agency, affective regard for sacred icons of devotions, and *fiesta* celebrations. As I say this, I am mindful of Geertz's (1973, p. 119) cautionary advice that the majority of people do not live in a world religious symbols formulate all the time but only in particular "moments". Thus, I have focused in the thesis on these "moments" of sacred connection, and how they affect

migrant dispositions in the decision-making processes, social relations, and cultural practices.

On the theological level, the Catholic Church has a “universal” doctrine and set of beliefs. This universal ideology however, has been subject to local interpretations by its evangelising agents. Filipino Christianity is a creolised religion -- a result of centuries of interaction between indigenous cultures and Spanish Christianity. The *fiesta* as I have proposed in the thesis, is the most dominant manifestation of creolised or folk Christianity among Filipinos, in the homeland as well as the diasporic communities in New Zealand and Singapore. Astorga (2006, p. 591), a Filipina theologian, explains the merits of popular religion among Filipinos:

[P]opular religion brings people in contact with God, whom they image as a God of absolute closeness... Arising from their own condition of powerlessness, they image God as one in whom they have access to power ... This empowerment is also embodied in communal celebrations ... Through popular devotions, people touch the mystery of the divine in ineffable ways. In their feasting, dancing, processions, their religion becomes an amalgam of prayer, worship, and social celebrations.

The affective prayer to a sacred icon and the feasting on the holy patron's *fiesta*, reveal another universe of Filipino migration that is beyond the mundane economy of remittances. My argument has been that Filipino migrants are enmeshed in folk Christianity's cosmological, ethical and moral

dispositions and that these influence their exercise of agency and commitment to family, supported through remittances, reciprocity, risk-taking, resilience, sacred devotion, celebration and ritual participation. It is in this sense that Filipino transnational migration, as well as being economic, also creates a sacred economy.

### **What the thesis affirms**

The ethnographic data affirms Werbner's (2005, p. 547) proposition that diasporas are chaordic social formations which replicate their institutions and cultural forms transnationally without any apparent centralised command. The Filipino communities in New Zealand and Singapore developed outside of the institutional control of the Philippine state and the Catholic Church, even if community gatherings are held in the church, and state representatives participate in community rituals. In New Zealand, the *Santacruzán* and the *Santo Niño-Sinulog fiestas* are lay initiatives independent of the church and state. In Singapore, while the presence of a Filipino chaplain is central to the ritual, it is the laity's overwhelming support that sustains the *Simbang Gabi's* novena liturgy and feasting. Wherever they migrate, Filipinos replicate these forms of devotion and celebration.

As mentioned earlier, two important areas of academic consensus are discernable in diaspora studies, one being the social heterogeneity of diasporas as communities with internal divisions and “multiplicity of discourses”, and the other being an understanding of diasporas as “historical formations in process” (Werbner 2000, p. 5). This is affirmed by the ethnographic chapters of this thesis which have shown the development of Filipino community formations and organisations and the contentious divisions and factions within Filipino communities in New Zealand and Singapore.

Migrants often followed one another in “chain migration” (Werbner 1990). From this view, the successful migration of one migrant encourages repeated future migrations of him/herself, as well as by others in his/her social network. My ethnographic observations have shown that some diasporic circles in New Zealand and Singapore form partly from pre-migration social networks of siblings, relatives and friends who followed one another in migration chains. Migrant accounts show that the family provides Filipino migrants the social capital (social circles and networks) that help raise funds, gather information and find helpful connections in the migration and settlement process. This affirms Tacoli’s (1999) observation that Filipino migration is a socially embedded process.



The diaspora literature shows that diasporas are dually oriented, towards the homeland and the place of settlement. The ethnographic material in my thesis demonstrates that Filipino migrant practices draw from homeland cultural traditions. These traditions, like devotions to holy patrons and *fiesta* celebrations, which developed over three centuries of cultural interactive processes between indigenous cultures and colonial Catholicism, are reinterpreted and adapted to address particular situations in New Zealand and Singapore. It is in this sense that Filipino diasporic identity is inscribed through the sacred, through religious rituals performed in religious spaces. In New Zealand, this leads to the development of a hyphenated identity as Filipino-New Zealanders, even as they highlight cultural distinctions and boundaries. In Singapore, the *Simbang Gabi*'s focus on crisis centre residents articulates the community's solidarity with maltreated, abused and dehumanised Filipina domestic workers and affirms their status as *kapwa* or co-human beings.

### **Native ethnography as contribution and limitation**

Anthropology's attention to the 'native' subject is foundational to the discipline and has led to a better understanding of the diverse ways of being human (Hage 2009). At the same time, it is also challenged to contribute to contemporary cultural discourse, without its "savage" subject (Appadurai 1996

p. 65). I find some resonance with Appadurai's (1991, p. 196) question whether "the localizing strategies of traditional ethnography alone" may be adequate to explain the "terms of the negotiation between imagined lives and deterritorialized worlds." He suggests "a new style of ethnography" that can "capture the impact of deterritorialization on the imaginative resources of lived, local experiences" by unravelling, to a certain extent, "the nature of locality, as a lived experience, in a globalized, deterritorialized world" (ibid.). Undoubtedly, a shift towards mobility and deterritorialisation has taken place in the last few decades, challenging anthropology to follow the trail of this movement. For some anthropologists at least, following these 'once natives' in the diasporas, thousands of miles away from their homelands, are as worthy of attention as the search for the 'natives' in nativeland. Needless to say that a significant number of these former natives have been transformed into cosmopolitans. And more importantly, a few of these cosmopolitans have become respected anthropologists, intent in studying their own people (or at least their co-nationals). Two prominent ones, Ghassan Hage (2005), a Lebanese-Australian, and Aihwa Ong (1999), a Chinese-Malaysian,<sup>294</sup> have proven that the anthropological discourse is no longer the sole domain of non-native Western anthropologists, nor anthropological field sites limited to

---

<sup>294</sup> Aihwa Ong was born in Malaysia and is a Chinese-Malaysian (Ong 1987, p. xvi). She has studied her co-nationals, Malay women factory workers in Selangor, Malaysia (Ong 1987). However, she has relocated to the U.S. and considers herself more as "a cosmopolitan with roots in many places" rather than a native anthropologist (Sinha 2010, p. 94). Hage (2005) left Lebanon to study in Australia and has relocated to Australia. He has studied the Lebanese immigrants in Sydney (Hage 1997).

preliterate and pre-industrial domains. Nonetheless, I write this final chapter aware that ‘native’ anthropologists remain not just as a minority but also still a novelty in the discipline.

Part of the advantage of being a ‘native’ ethnographer is our facility with language. Even if I do not speak all Filipino languages, I have adequate proficiency in Filipino (or Tagalog), have conversational understanding of Cebuano (which has greatly helped in my fieldwork in New Zealand), and of course fluency in my regional language, Bicol.<sup>295</sup> A positive effect of being a Filipino is most explicit in my Singapore ethnography. Had I been a non-Filipino, it would have been difficult to simultaneously make sense of the spatial allocations for the elite in the *Simbang Gabi* ritual and the reaction of a non-elite migrant like Vanessa (see p. 455) towards it. While a non-Filipino anthropologist would no doubt be able to understand and make an appropriate analysis through the help of an informant, it would take a longer time. A non-Filipino may find it puzzling to understand why Vanessa talks to herself in the crowd. My insider status allowed a simultaneous understanding of what was being said and its cultural relevance as *parinig/pasaring*, meaning, something that is heard, a Filipino cultural form of critique without naming its target, to allow the person to save face.

---

<sup>295</sup> I also have cousins who spoke Ilocano and friends who are Ilonggos, Warays, and Pangasinenses.

But there are also limitations and set-backs. As a Filipina researcher in a community beset by some long-running cleavages and feuds, staying above factional in-fighting was difficult. One's presence in a group event marks one as a '*kakampi*', one who is sympathetic to the group, and consequently, of doubtful loyalties to other groups. Each faction not only wants a co-national to listen to its side of the story, but also expects her to take sides. My subjective positioning as a native has thus been both enabling and disabling. Being an "insider" in the cultural group has helped with understanding the ethnographic subjects of the research, but it has also, on a few occasions, dragged me unnecessarily into partisan feuds. This insider subjective position, however, is something that most, if not all, anthropologists strive to achieve, even if it comes at a cost.

Geertz (1973, p. 13) points out that "ethnographic research" is "a personal experience". Agreeing with Geertz, Cohen (1987, p. 207), states:

[E]thnography is ethnographer-centered ... mediated by the ethnographer's native culture ... interpretive abilities... social relationships in the 'field'... in the *writing* of the ethnography the ethnographer's self acknowledges a quite different alternative: to present his judgments about one group in a manner which will be persuasive to another – that is to create 'persuasive fiction'.

If ethnography as an experience is mediated by the ethnographer's orientation and interpretation, then subjectivity is part and parcel of anthropology itself,

and therefore a predicament shared by all anthropologists, not just the native ones. In this sense, as a native ethnographer, I provide a close approximation to Geertz's ideal of "experience near" ethnography, but at the same time, in agreement with Cohen, the ethnography is also "persuasive fiction" of a particular group of transnational migrants, the Filipinos, whose nationality I happen to share. It is an interpretation, my 'version', one among many, which hopefully widens the "universe of human discourse" (Geertz 1973, p. 14) to include Filipino transnational migrants and their diasporic experience.

### **Key insights and contribution to migration and diaspora discourse**

The thesis contributes to the anthropological discourse on transnational migration and diaspora, first by offering an "experience near" ethnography (Geertz 1976, p. 223) and a "thick description" (Geertz 1973, p. 10) of migrant life and practices in the diasporic communities of New Zealand and Singapore. Second, the thesis shows how religion is enmeshed in Filipino transnational migration and diasporic life.

There have been some nagging questions about why Filipino migrants willingly migrate despite potential danger and risk, or endure hardships overseas. The migrant accounts in the thesis provide some reflexive explanations for risk-taking, resilience, and moral distancing behaviours. I

have argued that Filipino cultural notions of *kapalaran* (destiny), *swerte* (luck) and *bahala na* (whatever God allows will happen or God will provide) are enmeshed in migrant Filipinos' reflexive discourse and meaning-making as migrants. Destiny is not fixed but, rather, is open to negotiation with a God who has compassion (*may awa ang Diyos*). The narratives of domestic workers in Singapore weave folk Christian dispositions of sacred assistance with their exercise of agency, risk-taking, modes of resistance and resiliency that have been ordinarily bypassed by Filipino migration studies. The narratives of Filipina brides not only allow a glimpse into the beginnings of Filipino community formations in New Zealand, but also reveal affective dispositions oriented towards sacred icons and the *fiesta*. In addition, they reveal the cultural and gendered negotiations of difference in terms of cultural and religious identity within mixed marriages.

Many studies of migration note the Philippines' high remittance rates, but none have problematised it. The thesis has made a strong argument connecting Filipino folk Christian ethical and moral dispositions and notions of reciprocity to family commitments and responsibility. The ethnographic chapters have illustrated the interplay and connection between folk religiosity, family and social networks. My discussion highlighted Filipino migrants' exercise of agency as familial and sacral rather than individual and secular.

Thus, material and communication flows are not an end by themselves but are manifestations of religious dispositions that support enduring family commitment and reciprocity. Aside from the financial and social capital provided by family and social networks migrants also pray for the support and collaboration of the sacred. For Filipinos *compadrazgo* relationships extend to the wider circle of the cosmos, God, the assembly of the saints and angels, and spirits. Orsi (2005, p. 2-3) argues that:

*Immigrants and migrants establish connections between heaven and earth* that stretch between one environment and another and among families, friends, teachers, and others around the world, in their new homes and in the ones they left. Networks of connections between heaven and earth map the globe. (italics mine)

Thus for Filipinos, social capital has a sacred dimension (see also pp. 358-359). While familial relations are acknowledged by migrants through cash remittances and commodity flows, relations with the sacred find expression through vows [*panata* (in Tagalog)/*panaad* (in Cebuano)/*promesas* (in Bicol)]. The vows are fulfilled by performance of appropriate prayers and devotional rituals to God and the saints in return for specific favours. In this sense, migration is not only a remittance economy but also a sacred economy.

Third, while the thesis confirms the Filipino diaspora's homeland connections, it also at the same time "unpacks" them by looking at various manifestations of such connections. In a special way, religious symbols and icons are part of

migrant transnational border crossings. My discussion highlights Filipinos' affective attraction and connection to sacred icons. Favourite icons are carried by migrant travellers (or are worn on their bodies) to be enthroned in their new homes. In addition, sacred icons play a central role in the recreation of the hometown *fiestas* overseas. The ethnography of the New Zealand *fiestas* looks at the Philippines-New Zealand sacral-material linkages that include sacred icons, costumes, cultural performance, semantic expressions, and food. In Singapore, the ethnography documents migrant weekend practices and Christmas celebrations that manifest their cultural and symbolic links back home, like the *Simbang Gabi*, *Belen* and *Parol* that draw on Filipino homeland traditions to be reinterpreted in the migrant Catholic and Pentecostal community rituals. In both cases, diaspora linkages are not just emotional and metaphorical, but also material and spatial.

The thesis has shown that religion, expressed symbolically and spatially through folk devotions and *fiesta* celebrations, are performances of diasporic identity constructed from historical and social memory that include social relations, sacred icons, church space and ritual. I drew attention to the various forms of religious practice and identity expression assumed and constructed by Filipinos as individuals and communities in the process of migration and diasporic settlement. Within transnational spaces, *fiesta* celebrations become



Filipino localising activities of home -- as embodied memory lived in the present -- a reaching home metonymically through icons and other objects that travel, and being at home in the diaspora through ritual performance.

Finally, the thesis experiments with the application of symbolic theories formulated in the anthropological study of stable pre-literate and pre-industrial societies as these may be applied to mobile peoples, like Filipino migrants in modern, industrial societies like New Zealand and Singapore. It demonstrates the viability of Manning's (1983) notion of celebration as a communicative agent that embraces dual modes of expression, play and ritual; and the applicability of Turner's (1969) orectic and ideological poles of meaning in dominant symbols to migrant celebratory rituals in the diaspora. In this sense, the application of interpretive and symbolic anthropological insights may be useful in the analysis of migrant communities in the framing of emergent migration-diaspora relationships.

### **Research limitations and directions for future explorations**

The thesis's exploration of the role of religion in Filipino transnational migration and diaspora has admittedly been limited by the fieldwork time frame and budget constraints that have affected the research coverage. First, it only dealt with first generation Filipino migrants in New Zealand. While it

describes migrant efforts at cultural transmission to the next generation, no effort was made to ask the children what they think, and how they feel about participating in cultural activities and rituals coming from a country that most of them have not seen but only heard about, mainly due to the possible ethical complications it may have posed. These second generation Filipino diasporans in New Zealand may be a good subject of study for future researchers.

The research in Singapore was limited to the Filipino Catholics and members of a Pentecostal Church. It would have been beneficial to have included the investigation of other Christian denominations who cater to migrant needs, or to have followed the weekly meetings of the cell groups of non-Catholic migrant Christians to investigate how anthropological concepts and premises may have helped in understanding what they do, and if there are homeland symbols and rituals that help sustain their small group gatherings. However, since almost all migrant activities happen on Sundays, and I had to divide my six months fieldwork between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, these could not be done.

While noting that there are Filipino-owned stalls in Lucky Plaza, I was not able to pursue a deeper investigation about the Filipino owners. Attention to the Filipino entrepreneurs in Singapore, especially the proprietors of the

Filipino-oriented Lucky Plaza stalls, the publishers of migrant-oriented magazines, and the people maintaining the Filipino migrant websites, would have certainly contributed to the thesis's discussion.

The thesis barely scratched the surface of the great divide between the ideology of institutionalised religions, official ritual practices and performances, and ordinary peoples' actual religious dispositions, practices and performances. In New Zealand, while I observed some devotional practices in Christchurch, for example, the novena to the Mother of Perpetual Help, I was unable to observe the Lenten activities initiated by Filipinos in Auckland which is said to be drawing participation not only from Filipinos but also Samoan and Kiwi Catholics. In terms of Singapore, it would also have been of great benefit to the thesis to have included a comparative analysis of folk Christian dispositions between the Filipina domestic workers and skilled professional migrants. I was also unable to investigate if gender differences affect migrant dispositions.

No doubt the lack of academic literature on folk Christianity or popular religiosity among various migrant Christian communities in New Zealand, and even among Catholic New Zealanders, has limited the scope of comparison for this thesis. Regretably, the significant number of studies on religion among

immigrant communities in the U.S.<sup>296</sup> could not be matched by other migrant destination places in East Asia, such as Japan, Korea and China; in Southeast Asia, such as Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore; and Oceania, such as Australia and New Zealand. A wider coverage of research literature on migrant communities and their religious practices in New Zealand, Singapore and other areas would certainly have contributed to the comparative value of this thesis.

## Conclusion

Different host societies have specific ways of dealing and managing ethnic migrant populations, with some more accepting and integrating than others. In most, migrant communities have been limited mainly to “cultural gatherings” where their presence is used to validate the image of a multicultural society. In a settler society such as New Zealand, multiculturalism or cultural pluralism has been adopted not just to accept, but to celebrate difference and diversity. But despite progressive policies and efforts to integrate migrants, most remain in the periphery of the national space. This is because among its *Pakeha* citizenry, pockets of resistance to non-European migrants remain. In terms of a postcolonial state like Singapore whose ethnic composition and territorial

---

<sup>296</sup> Studies on various immigrant groups with diverse religious affiliation in the U.S. are cited in footnote 12 (see p. 20) in the introduction.

boundaries were defined by colonialism, the reference to multiculturalism needs to be understood more in terms of its multi-ethnic citizen composition rather than a celebration of diversity in the presence of migrant ethno-national communities that have sprouted in its midst.

There are “localising” efforts both by the transnational migrants and the “locals” taking divergent trajectories: one group performs homeland practices, and the other preserves or protects “local practices.” Unequal power typifies relations between migrants and “locals” in terms of opportunities and benefits (Hatton and Williamson 2008, pp. 13-14). “Locals” enjoy the protection of nation-state regulations and policies and are supported structurally by established systems of support. It is in the peripheral and disadvantaged position within the multicultural but unequal field that diaspora identity construction takes place. Diaspora members for the most part take the remnants and leftovers, specifically the jobs that most locals do not want. Werbner (2007, p. 655) notes the diasporas’ “local invisibility”. Diasporans are often tolerated as the silent and invisible ‘other’ in host societies. For Filipinos, *fiestas* are occasions not only of being together in order to create and inscribe a common identity, but also of being “seen and heard.”

Filipino identity, as we have seen, is three-tiered. The primary identifications of Filipino migrants remain familial and regional rather than national. This is seen in migrant clusters and rituals, where regional languages and local icons of devotion support hometown loyalties. The church as the familiar home institution is a mnemonic reminder of migrant family, locality (the hometown), and community (kin and friends).

In addition to its function of reinforcing class reciprocal relations in Filipino lowland cultures, in the diaspora religious rituals are venues for visibility, mobilisation and hospitality. In this sense, religious rituals among Filipinos are not only reflexive and self-referencing, but are communicative tools that frame a desired diasporic identity for the outside world, starting with the host society.

Christian churches have consistently emerged as the popular places for diaspora gatherings and meetings among Filipino migrants in New Zealand and Singapore. Predictably, Catholic spaces (churches and pastoral centres) are the more prominent gathering venues for migrants, reflecting the demographic reality of Catholicism as the dominant religious affiliation of the Filipino majority and the deeply ingrained centuries-old tradition of hometown *fiestas*. In this transformed place, the people, sights, sounds, jokes, and food

are “Filipino” just like they are at home. In church space, at particular times, especially during *fiestas*, migrants reconstruct their hometown transnationally.

While Catholicism may be seen to have an edge over other religious institutions, it has had to contend with Filipino folk religions’ creolisation of its practices. Through centuries of colonisation, indigenous cosmologies merged with Christianity resulting in a Filipino folk Christian religion. As previously mentioned, Filipino migrant narratives denote folk notions of destiny (*kapalaran*), luck (*swerte*), bad luck (*malas*), and the popular risk taking semantic expression, ‘God will take care’ or ‘come what may/whatever happens God will take care’ (*bahala na*). Filipino creolised Christianity is seen in migrant narratives asking God and the saints for luck, *swerte*, and good fortune, *kapalaran*.

The thesis has shown that folk religiosity, rather than official Catholic spirituality, plays a more significant role in the Filipino transnational migration. I have shown that would-be migrants and their families consult and implore God and the saints about jobs and visas. I have demonstrated in the ethnographic discussions that favourite sacred icons are taken along on migrants’ transnational journeys, carried in their luggages, on their bodies, or even given a seat on the plane, to be later enthroned in migrant homes. Where

devotions to their favourite saints are absent, Filipino migrants take pains to introduce them. Folk religious traditions and practices among overseas Filipinos have become identifiable markers of distinction setting them apart from local and other migrant Catholics. Prayers and ritual performance seemingly address migrant displacement and insecurity. In this sense, religion through its institutional reach provides an important venue and force for ethnic reproduction, assimilation and change (Cao 2005, p. 183).

But the Church is not only about remembering the past. As shown in the ethnography, it is also a place of migrant meaning-making in the present: it provides the domain for a migrant moral economy of social relations, where new circles of kinship and community are created, and social exchanges occur. Wilma, a Filipina who converted to Islam to marry a Muslim from the Middle East, went to a Catholic Church just to find other Filipinos in New Zealand. Lastly, I have suggested that family and home are the central cultural themes of Filipino migration. Papastergiadis (1998, p. 6) states:

Mapping the world starts with the primary marker of the home. The distinction between the self/other; inside/outside; order/chaos revolve around the prior constructions of the home as the position from which these values can be discerned. Home is the place where moral knots are untied and ethical patterns are stitched together.



For Filipinos, home also ideally models the cosmic balance of strength and beauty, power and compassion, passion and gentleness (see pp. 187-189). To be “at home” is to be in a place of harmony, balance, and shared meanings. Diasporic communities, in varying levels, provide a home-away-from-home.

The migrant celebration of the *fiesta-feria* sequel allows a metaphorical home-coming and home-making. The family and home are made present in the diaspora. This is seen in the iconic presence of the mother and son, Mary and the *Santo Niño*,<sup>297</sup> both home symbols, in diaspora processions and rituals. The family remains the nexus of Filipino migrant loyalty and affection, and the home, the locus of longing and return. *Fiesta* celebrations are elaborate religious events that point to the central role of the family home in Filipino lowland cultures. *Fiesta* celebrations and church spaces are the domains of Filipino identity inscription in New Zealand and Singapore. In this sense, Filipino identity, as the title of the thesis suggests, is inscribed through the sacred.

---

<sup>297</sup> Winnicot ([1951] 2011) suggests that some Catholic symbols are transitional objects. However, his example of the child's need for transitional object in the absence of the mother does not seem applicable as a conceptual explanation for Filipino migrants' affection for their sacred icons.

## Cited Bibliography

### Documents / Reports / Statistics

Bull for Erection of the Diocese and Cathedral of Manila ([1578] 1973).

*Census of Population 2010: Advance Census Release*, 2010, Singapore  
Department of Statistics, Singapore

Census 2006, 'Quick Stats About Culture and Identity'. Statistics New Zealand,  
pp. 1-14.

Census 1981, 'Race General Summary'. New Zealand Statistics.

Census 1966, 'Race General Summary'. Statistics New Zealand, p. 9.

Census 1951, 'Population Census 1951'. New Zealand Statistics.

Census 1936, 'Dominion of New Zealand Population Census'. Census and  
Statistics Department Dominion of New Zealand.

Census 1867, 'Dominion of New Zealand Population Census'. Census and  
Statistics Department Dominion of New Zealand.

Census 1881, 'Dominion of New Zealand Population Census'. Census and  
Statistics Department Dominion of New Zealand.

Edinburg Review 1882, 'North Borneo' 1882, *Foreign and Commonwealth  
Office Collection: Edinburg Review* July 1882, pp. 137-70.

*Facts and Figures*, 2012, International Organization for Migration (IOM)

*Facts and Figures*, 2005, International Organization for Migration (IOM)

*Gross Domestic Product 2008*, 2009, World Bank, Washington D.C.

*Gross Domestic Product 2008, PPP*, 2009, World Bank, Washington D.C.

*Gross National Income Per Capita 2008, Atlas Method*, 2009, World Bank,  
Washington D.C.

*Human Development Report 2009*, United Nations Development Programme, New York.

'Immigration Act 1987', in *Public Act 1987 No. 74*, ed. NZ Parliament, Wellington.

Kyodo News International 1998, 'What is a Filipina? Philippines Blasts 'Filipina' Entry in Greek Dictionary', *Kyodo News International*

*National Population Estimates: March 2010 Quarter*, 2010, National Statistics New Zealand, Wellington.

*Permanent and Long-term Migration from the Philippines*, 2007, Statistics New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand.

*Philippines 2006*, Asian Development Bank, Quezon City, Philippines.

*Philippine Affair* 1986, TVNZ, New Zealand.

Philippine Statistical Yearbook 2007, 'Filipino Emigrants to New Zealand Increase Four-fold in 2006' 2007. National Statistical Coordination Board, April 22, 2008.

*POEA Annual Report 2004*, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration Quezon City, Philippines.

*Population 2008, 2009*, World Bank, Washington D.C.

*Population May 2010*, National Statistics Office. Republic of the Philippines, Manila, Philippines

*QuickStats About New Zealand*, 2006, Statistics New Zealand, Wellington

'Singapore's Flor, Part 2' 2000, in *Asiaweek.com*. Asia Week, Singapore

*Stock Estimate of Filipinos Overseas as of December 2011*, Commission on Filipinos Overseas, Quezon City, Philippines

*Stock Estimate of Filipinos Overseas as of December 2010*, Commission on Filipinos Overseas, Quezon City, Philippines

*Stock Estimate of Filipinos Overseas as of December 2009*, Commission on Filipinos Overseas, Quezon City, Philippines

*Stock Estimate of Filipinos Overseas as of December 2008*, Commission on Filipino Overseas, Manila, Philippines

*Stock Estimate of Filipinos Overseas as of December 2007*, Commission on Filipino Overseas, Manila, Philippines

*Stock Estimate of Filipinos Overseas as of December 2005*, Commission on Filipinos Overseas, Manila, Philippines

*Stock Estimates of Filipino Overseas as of December 2004*, Commission on Filipino Overseas, Manila, Philippines

'The Economist Intelligence Report' 2005. Economist Intelligence Unit.

*The Migrants Report 2007*, Christchurch City Council, Christchurch

United Nations *International Migration Report 2006*, United Nations, New York

United Nations *International Migration Report 2002*, United Nations, New York

*World Bank Migration and Development Brief 2009* World Bank, Washington, D.C.

### **Cited References:**

Abella, M 2006, 'Global Competition for Skilled Workers and Consequences', in C Kuptsch & PE Fong (eds), *Competing for Global Talent*, International Institute for Labour Studies, ILO and Wee Kim Wee Centre, Singapore Management University, Geneva and Singapore, pp. 11-32.

Abusharaf, RM 1998, 'Structural Adaptations in an Immigrant Muslim Congregation in New York', in SR Warner & JG Wittner (eds), *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, pp. 235-61.

- Afolayan, AA 2001, 'Issues and Challenges of Emigration Dynamics in Developing Countries', *International Migration*, vol. 39, no. 4, pp. 5-38.
- Agbayani, AR 1991, 'Community Impacts of Migration: Recent Ilocano Migration to Hawai'i', *Social Process in Hawaii*, vol. 33, pp. 73-90.
- Aguilar, F 2009, 'Labour Migration and Ties of Relatedness: Diasporic Houses and Investments in Memory in a Rural Philippine Village', *Thesis Eleven*, no. 98, pp. 88-114.
- Aguilar, FJ 2005, 'Tracing Origins: "Ilustrado" Nationalism and the Racial Science of Migration Waves', *The Association for Asian Studies*, vol. 64, no. 3, pp. 605-37.
- Ahdar, RJ 2006, 'Reflections on the Path of Religion-State Relations in New Zealand', *Brigham Young University Law Review*, vol. 2006, no. 3, pp. 619-59.
- Ahmed, S, Castañeda, C, Fortier, A-M & Sheller, M 2003, 'Introduction: Uprootings/Regroundings: Question of Home and Migration', in S Ahmed, C Castañeda, A-M Fortier & M Sheller (eds), *Uprootings/Regroundings: Question of Home and Migration*, Berg, Oxford; New York, pp. 1-19.
- Alayon, JRS 2009, *Migration, Remittances and Development: The Filipino New Zealand Experience* Auckland University of Technology, Auckland.
- Alcid, MLL 2006, 'NGO-Labor Union Cooperation in the Promotion of the Rights and Interests of Landbased Overseas Filipino Workers', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, vol. 15, no. 3, pp. 335-57.
- Allen, JP 1977, 'Recent Immigration from the Philippines and the Filipino Communities in the United States', *Geographical Review*, vol. 67, no. 2, pp. 195-208.
- Allen, JS 1938, 'Agrarian Tendencies in the Philippines', *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 52-65.
- Almirol, E 1979, 'Filipinos in the U.K.', *RAIN*, no. 31, pp. 3-4.

- Amrith, M 2010, 'They Think We are Just Caregivers': The Ambivalence of Care in the Lives of Filipino Medical Workers in Singapore', *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 410-27.
- Annan, K 2006, 'Address to the High-level Dialogue of the United Nations General Assembly on International Migration and Development', in *United Nations General Assembly*. United Nations, New York, USA.
- Anderson, B [1983]1991, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London; New York.
- Anderson, B 2000, *Doing the Dirty Work? The Global Politics of Domestic Labour*, St. Martin's Press, London.
- Anderson, JN 2005, 'Filipinos in Japan', in *Encyclopedia of Diasporas*, vol. III, eds. M Ember, CR Ember & I Skoggard. Springer Science+Business Media Inc., Boston, pp. 808-18.
- Andres, AG 1984, 'Conditions, Problems, Prospects and Policy Issues of Overseas Employment: The Case of the Filipino Domestic Helpers in HongKong and Japan', *The Journal of Sophia Asian Studies Center*, no. 1984, pp. 80-104.
- Ang, I 2001, *On Not Speaking Chinese: Living Between Asia and the West*, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, London and New York.
- Angeles, L & Sunanta, S 2007, '"Exotic Love at Your Fingertips": Intermarriage Websites, Gendered Representation, and the Transnational Migration of Filipino and Thai Women', *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies*, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 3-31.
- Angeles, VS 2001, 'Filipino Catholic Communities in Philadelphia ', in *Harvard University Pluralism Project*, Massachusetts, pp. 1-60, April 8, 2009.
- Antolin, JB 2002, 'Asian Immigrants in Spain: An Overview', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, vol. 11, no. 4, pp. 485-504.
- Appadurai, A 2003, 'Sovereignty without Territoriality: Notes for a Postnational Geography', in SM Low & D Lawrence-Zuñiga (eds),

*The Anthropology of Space and Place*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, pp. 337-49.

Appadurai, A 1996, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis; London.

Appadurai, A 1991, 'Global Ethnoscapes: Notes and Queries for a Transnational Anthropology', in RG Fox (ed.), *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, School of American Research Press, Santa Fe, New Mexico, pp. 191-210.

Appadurai, A 1988, 'Introduction: Place and Voice in Anthropological Theory', *Cultural Anthropology*, pp. 16-20.

Aquino, B 2000, 'The Church's Nonreligious Roles Among Filipino Catholic Migrants in Tokyo', in CJ-H Macdonald & GM Pesigan (eds), *Old Ties and New Solidarities: Studies on Philippine Communities*, Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City, Philippines, pp. 100-16.

Asad, T 1993, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London.

Asato, W 2004, 'Negotiating Spaces in the Labor Market: Foreign and Local Domestic Workers in Hong Kong', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 255-74.

Asis, MMB 2011, 'Migration and Development in the Philippines: Is Governance the Missing Link?', in MMB Asis (ed.), *Minding the Gaps: Migration, Development and Governance in the Philippines*, Scalabrini Migration Center, Manila, Philippines pp. 1-16.

Asis, MMB 2006, 'The Philippines' Culture of Migration', in *Migration Information Source*. Migration Policy Institute Washington DC.

Asis, MB 2005, 'International Migration and Prospects for Gender Equality', in *International Migration and the Millenium Development Goals: Selected Papers of the UNFPA Expert Group Meeting*. United Nations Population Fund, Marrakech, Morocco, pp. 113-24, 11-12 May 2005.

- Asis, MB 2003, 'When Men and Women Migrate: Comparing Gendered Migration in Asia', in *Consultative Meeting on "Migration and Mobility and How this Movement Affects Women"* United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), Malmo, Sweden, pp. 1-20, 2-4 December 2003.
- Asis, MMB 2002, 'From the Life Stories of Filipino Women: Personal and Family Agendas in Migration', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 67-93.
- Asis, MMB 2001, 'The Return Migration of Filipino Women Migrants: Home, But Not for Good', in C Wille & B Passl (eds), *Female Labour Migration in South-East Asia: Change and Continuity*, Asian Research Centre for Migration, Bangkok, pp. 23-93.
- Asis, MMB, Huang, S & Yeoh, BSA 2004, 'When the Light of the Home is Abroad: Unskilled Female Migration and the Filipino Family', *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 198-215.
- Astorga, MCA 2006, 'Culture, Religion and Moral Vision: A Theological Discourse on the Filipino People Power Revolution of 1986', *Theological Studies*, vol. 67, no. 3, pp. 567-601.
- Avieli, N 2005, 'Roasted Pigs and Bao Dumplings: Festive food and imagined transnational identity in Chinese-Vietnamese Festivals', *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, vol. 46, no. 3, pp. 281-93.
- Bakhtin, MM (ed.) 1984, *Rabelais and His world*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- Ball, R & Piper, N 2002, 'Globalisation and Regulation of Citizenship - Filipino migrant workers in Japan', *Political Geography*, no. 21, pp. 1013-34.
- Bandyopadhyay, S 2006, 'Reinventing Indian Identity in Multicultural New Zealand', in H Johnson & B Moloughney (eds), *Asia in the Making of New Zealand*, Auckland University Press, Auckland, pp. 125-46.
- Barber, PG 2008, 'The Ideal Migrant? Gendered Class Subjects in Philippine-Canada Migration ', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 29, no. 7, pp. 1265-85.



- Barber, PG 2000, 'Agency in Philippine Women's Labour Migration and Provisional Diaspora', *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 399-411.
- Barber, PG 1997, 'Transnationalism and the Politics of "Home" for Philippine Domestic Workers', *Anthropologica* vol. 39, no. 1/2, pp. 39-52.
- Barth, F 1969, 'Introduction', in F Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, Uniersitets Forlaget, Bergen, pp. 9-37.
- Basch, I, Glick-Schiller, N & Szanton-Blanc, C 1994, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States*, Gordon & Breach, Basle.
- Battistela, G 1992, *Migration: Opportunity or Loss*, Scalabrini Migration Center, Quezon City, Philippines.
- Battistella, G & Asis, MB (eds.) 2003, *Unauthorized Migration in Southeast Asia*, Sclabrini Migration Center, Quezon City, Philippines.
- Battistela, G & Conaco, MCG 1998, 'The Impact of Labour Migration on the Children Left Behind: A Study of Elementary School Children in the Philippines', *SOJOURN*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 220-41.
- Battistela, G & Paganoni, A (eds.) 1992, *Philippine Labor Migration: Impact and Policy*, Scalabrini Migration Center, Quezon City, Philippines.
- Bauer, T, Epstein, GS & Gang, IN, 2005, 'Enclaves, Language, and the Location Choice of Migrants', *Journal of Population Economics*, vol. 18, no. 4, pp. 649-62.
- Baumann, M 2004, 'A Diachronic View of Diaspora, the Significance of Religion and Hindu Trinidadians', in Waltraud Kokot, K Tololyan & C Alfonso (eds), *Diaspora, Identity and Religion: New Directions in Theory and Research*, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, London and New York, pp. 170-88.
- Baumann, M 2000, 'Diaspora: Genealogies of Semantics and Transcultural Comparison', *Numen*, vol. 47, no. 3, pp. 313-37.

- Bautista, MCRB 2003, 'Migrant Workers and Their Environments: Insights from the Filipino Diaspora', in *Philippine Migration*. University of the Philippines, Quezon City Philippines.
- Beardsworth, A & Keil, T 1992, 'Foodways in Flux: From Gastro-Anomy to Meny Pluralism?', *British Food Journal*, vol. 94, no. 7
- Bedford, R, Ho, E & Lidgard, J 2000, 'International Migration in New Zealand: Context, Components and Policy Issues', *Population Studies Centre Discussion Papers*.
- Bell, C 1997, *Ritual Perspectives and Dimensions*, Oxford University Press, New York; Oxford.
- Bell, DA & Piper, N 2005, 'Justice for Migrant Workers? The Case of Foreign Domestic Workers in Hong Kong and Singapore', in W Kymlicka & B He (eds), *Multiculturalism in Asia*, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, pp. 196-222.
- Benda, HJ 1965, 'Political Elites in Colonial Southeast Asia: An Historical Analysis', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 233-52.
- Benson, M 2010, 'Landscape, Imagination and Experience: Processes of Emplacement Among the British in Rural France', *The Sociological Review*, vol. 58, no. Supplement s2, pp. 63-77.
- Berger, PL 2005, 'Religion and the West', *The National Interest*, vol. 80, p. 112.
- Berger, PL 2001, 'Reflections on the Sociology of Religion Today', *Sociology of Religion*, vol. 6, no. 4, pp. 443-54.
- Berger, PL 1999, 'The Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview', in PL Berger (ed.), *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, Ethics and Public Policy Center; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Washington, D.C.; Grand Rapids, Michigan, pp. 1-18.

- Bergquist, KJS 2006, 'From Kim Chee to Moon Cakes: Feeding Asian Adoptees' Imaginings of Culture and Self', *Food, Culture & Society*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 142-53.
- Betsayda, MGT 2008, "*Bahala Na Ang Dios*": *The Church's Role in the Socialization of Filipinos in the Greater Toronto Area*, Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- Beyer, P 1994, *Religion and Globalization*, Sage Publications, London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi.
- Beyer, P 1999, 'Secularization from the Perspective of Globalization: A Response to Dobbelaere', *Sociology of Religion*, vol. 60, no. 3, pp. 289-301.
- Beyer, P 2003, 'De-Centring Religious Singularity: The Globalization of Christianity as a Case in Point', *Numen*, vol. 50, no. 4, pp. 357-86.
- Bhabha, HK 1996, 'Cultures In-between', in S Hall & PD Gay (eds), *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Sage Publications, London; Thousand Oaks; New Delhi, pp. 53-60.
- Bhabha, HK 1994, *The Location of Culture*, Routledge, London and New York.
- Bloch, M 1977, 'The Past and the Present in the Present', *Man, New Series*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 278-92.
- Blunt, A 2007, 'Cultural Geographies of Migration: Mobility, Transnationality and Diaspora', *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 31, no. 5, pp. 684-94.
- Bodley, JH 1999, *Victims of Progress*, Mayfield Publishing Co., Mountain View, California.
- Boissevain, J 1969, *Hal-Farrug A Village in Malta*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York; Chicago; San Francisco; Atlanta; Dallas; Montreal; Toronto; London; Sydney.
- Boissevain, J 1969, *Saints and Fireworks: Religion and Politics in Rural Malta*, Athlone, London.

- Bond, R 2006, 'Belonging and Becoming: National Identity and Exclusion', *Sociology*, vol. 40, no. 4, pp. 609-26.
- Bonnekessen, B 2010, 'Food is Good to Teach: An Exploration of the Cultural Meanings of Food', *Food, Culture & Society*, vol. 13, no. 2, p. 280.
- Borah, EG 1997-2004, 'Chronology of Filipinos in America Pre-1898'.
- Borah, EG 1996, 'The Filipino Landing in Morro Bay in 1587', *FANHS Journal*, vol. 4.
- Borah, EG 1996, 'Filipinos in Unamuno's California Expedition of 1587', *AMERASIA Journal*, vol. 21, no. 3
- Bourdieu, P 1998, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Bourdieu, P 1986, 'The Forms of Capital', in JG Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, Greenwood Press, New York; Westport, Connecticut; London, pp. 241-58.
- Bourdieu, P 1984, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Bourgignon, E 2001, 'Trance and Ecstatic Dance', in A Dils & AC Albright (eds), *Moving History / Dancing cultures: A Dance History Reader*, Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, Connecticut, pp. 97-102.
- Bourne, EG [1902]1973, 'Historical Introduction', in EH Blair & JA Roberson (eds), *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898*, vol. 1-3, Cachos Hermanos, Inc., Mandaluyong, Rizal, Philippines, pp. 19-87.
- Boyd, M [1989] 1996, 'Family and Personal Networks in International Migration', in R Cohen (ed.), *The Sociology of Migration*, International Library of Studies on Migration; Elgar Reference Collection, Cheltenham, UK; Brookfield, US, pp. 296-328.
- Brah, A 2002, 'Global Mobilities, Local Predicaments: Globalization and the Critical Imagination', *Feminist Review*, no. 70, pp. 30-45.

- Brah, A 2000, 'The Scent of Memory: Strangers, Our Own and Others', in A Brah & AE Coombes (eds), *Hybridity and its Discontents: Politics, science, culture*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 272-90.
- Brah, A 1996, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*, Routledge, London and New York.
- Brettell, CB 2006, 'Introduction: Global Spaces / Local Places: Transnationalism, Diaspora, and the Meaning of Home', *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, vol. 13, pp. 327-34.
- Briones, L 2009, 'Reconsidering the Migration-Development Link: Capability and Livelihood in Filipina Experiences of Domestic Work in Paris', *Population, Space and Place*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 133-45.
- Briones, L 2008, 'Beyond Trafficking, Agency and Rights: A Capabilities Perspective on Filipina Experiences of Domestic Work in Paris and Hong Kong', *Wagadu*, vol. 5, pp. 49-72.
- Brodwin, P 2003, 'Marginality and Subjectivity in the Haitian Diaspora', *Anthropological Quarterly*, vol. 76, no. 3, pp. 383-410.
- Brubaker, R 2005, 'The 'Diaspora' Diaspora', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 1-19.
- Bruce, S 2002, *God is Dead: Secularization in the West*, Blackwell Publishing, United Kingdom.
- Brush, BL & Sochalski, J 2007, 'International Nurse Migration: Lessons from the Philippines', *Policy, Politics & Nursing Practice*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 37-46.
- Bruyn, ST 1999, 'The Moral Economy', *Review of Social Economy*, vol. 57, no. 1, pp. 25-46.
- Buchan, J 2006, 'Filipino Nurses in the UK: A Case Study in Active International Recruitment', *Harvard Health Policy Review*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 113-20.
- Bushnell, J 1958, 'La Virgen de Guadalupe as Surrogate Mother in San Juan Atzingo', *American Anthropologist*, vol. 60, no. 2, pp. 261-5.

- Butcher, A, Spoonley, P & Trlin, A 2006, *Being Accepted: The Experience of Discrimination and Social Exclusion by Immigrants and Refugees in New Zealand*, New Settlers Programme, Massey University, Palmerston North.
- Cabilao, M 1992, 'Local Options and Life Abroad', in R Pertierra (ed.), *Remittances and Returnees: The Cultural Economy of Migration in Ilocos*, New Day Publishers, Quezon City, pp. 24-56.
- Camroux, D 2009, 'Nationalizing A 'Transnational' Diaspora? The Philippine State and Filipino Emigration', in *The Changing Dynamics of Filipino Overseas Migration: The State in the Context of Nationalism, Regionalism, and Transnationalism*, pp. 1-59, 13-08-2011.
- Cannell, F 2005, 'Immaterial Culture: "Idolatry" in the Lowland Philippines', in AC Willford & KM George (eds), *Spirited Politics*, Southeast Asian Program Publications, Ithaca, New York, pp. 159-84.
- Cannell, F 1999, *Power and Intimacy in the Christian Philippines*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Cannell, F 1995, 'The Imitation of Christ in Bicol, Philippines', *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 377-94.
- Cao, N 2005, 'The Church as a Surrogate Family for Working Class Immigrant Chinese Youth: An Ethnography of Segmented Assimilation', *Sociology of Religion*, vol. 66, no. 2, pp. 183-200.
- Cariño, BV 1992, *Migrant Workers from the Philippines*, Scalabrini Migration Center, Quezon City, Philippines.
- Carlos, MRD 2002, 'On the Determinants of International Migration in the Philippines: An Empirical Analysis', *International Migration Review*, vol. 36, no. 1, pp. 81-102.
- Chai, KJ 1998, 'Competing for the Second Generation: English-Language Ministry at a Korean Protestant Church ', in SR Warner & JG Wittner (eds), *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, pp. 295-331.

- Chase-Dunn, C & Grimes, P 1995, 'World-Systems Analysis', *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 21, pp. 387-417.
- Cheah, BK 2002, *Malaysia: The Making of a Nation*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore.
- Chen, C 2002, 'The Religious Varieties of Ethnic Presence: A Comparison Between a Taiwanese Immigrant Buddhist Temple and an Evangelical Christian Church', *Sociology of Religion*, vol. 63, no. 2, pp. 215-38.
- Cheng, S-JA 1996, 'Migrant Women Domestic Workers in Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan: A Comparative Analysis', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 139-52.
- Cheng, S-JA 2004, 'Contextual Politics of Difference in Transnational Care: The Rhetoric of Filipina Domestic Workers' Employers in Taiwan', *Feminist Review*, no. 77, pp. 46-64.
- Chew, V 2009, 'Flor Contemplacion', in *Singapore Infomedia*. National Library Board Singapore, Singapore.
- Chin, CBN 2005, 'Neither at Work nor at Home: Asian Transnational Domestic Workers in Malaysia', in S Huang, BSA Yeoh & NA Rahman (eds), *Asian Women as Transnational Domestic Workers*, Marshall Cavendish Academic, London; New York; Beijing; Bangkok; Kuala Lumpur; Singapore, pp. 262-87.
- Chin, CBN 2003, 'Visible Bodies, Invisible Work: State Practices Toward Migrant Domestic Workers in Malaysia', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, vol. 12, no. 1-2, pp. 49-73.
- Chin, CBN 1997, 'Walls of Silence and Late Twentieth Century Representations of the Foreign Female Domestic Worker: The Case of Filipina and Indonesian Female Servants in Malaysia', *International Migration Review*, vol. 31, no. 2, pp. 353-85.
- Chirino, P [1601]1973, 'Relation of the Filipinas Islands and of What Has There Been Accomplished by the Fathers of the Society of Jesus (Part 1)', in EH Blair & JA Robertson (eds), *The Philippine Islands 1493-*

1898, vol. XII - 1601 - 1604, Cachos Hermanos, Inc., Mandaluyong, Rizal, Philippines, pp. 175-321.

Chiswick, BR & Miller, PW 2002, *Do Enclaves Matter in Immigrant Adjustment?*, Institute for the Study of Labor, Bonn, Germany

Chong, KH 1998, 'What it Means to Be Christian: The Role of Religion in the Construction of Ethnic Identity and Boundary Among Second-Generation Korean Americans', *Sociology of Religion*, vol. 59, no. 3, pp. 259-86.

Christiansen, JB 1979, 'The Split Labor Market Theory and Filipino Exclusion: 1927-1934', *Phylon*, vol. 40, no. 1, pp. 66-74.

Christou, A 2006, 'Deciphering Diaspora - Translating Transnationalism: Family Dynamics, Identity Constructions and the Legacy of 'Home' in Second-generation Greek-American Return Migration', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 29, no. 6, pp. 1040-56.

Cieraad, I 1999, 'Introduction: Anthropology at Home', in I Cieraad (ed.), *At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space*, Syracuse University Press, New York, pp. 1-12.

Clark, J 2004, 'Filipino Women in Tasmania: Negotiating Gender Ideologies', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 363-80.

Clark, K & Drinkwater, S 2002, 'Enclaves, Neighbourhood Effects and Employment Outcomes: Ethnic Minorities in England and Wales', *Journal of Population Economics*, no. 15, pp. 5-29.

Claudia, M & Yang, D 2007, 'Remittances and Poverty in Migrants' Home Areas: Evidence from the Philippines', *La Serie de Documentos de Trabajo (SDT) del Departamento de Economia de la Universidad de Chile*, no. 257

Clifford, J 1997, 'Spatial Practices: Fieldwork, Travel, and the Disciplining of Anthropology', in A Gupta & J Ferguson (eds), *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*, University of California Press, Berkeley; Los Angeles, London, pp. 185-222.

Clifford, J 1994, 'Diasporas', *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 302-38.



- Clymer, KJ 1980, 'Religion and American Imperialism: Methodist Missionaries in the Philippine Islands, 1899-1913', *The Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 49, no. 1, pp. 29-50.
- Coe, NM & Kelly, PF 2000, 'Distance and Discourse in the Local Labour Market: The Case of Singapore', *Area*, vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 413-22.
- Cohen, AP 1987, *Whalsay: Symbol, Segment and Boundary in a Shetland Island Community*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, UK.
- Cohen, AP 1985, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, Ellis Horwood Limited Publishers; Tavistock Publications Chichester; London and New York.
- Cohen, G 2007, 'A Sense of People and Place: The Chapel and Language in Sustaining Welsh Identity', in FD Bryceson, J Okely & J Webber (eds), *Identity and Networks: Fashioning Gender and Ethnicity Across Cultures*, Berghahn Books, New York; Oxford, pp. 91-102.
- Cohen, R 1997, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, UCL Press, London.
- Cohen, R & Gold, G 1997, 'Constructing Ethnicity: Myth of Return and Modes of Exclusion Among Israelis in Toronto', *International Migration*, vol. 35, no. 3, pp. 374-94.
- Collins, FL 2009, 'Connecting 'Home' With 'Here': Personal Homepages in Everyday Transnational Lives', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 35, no. 6, pp. 839-59.
- Collon, D 2003, 'Dance in Ancient Mesopotamia', *Near Eastern Archaeology*, vol. 66, no. 3, pp. 96-102.
- Collymore, Y 2003, 'Rapid Population Growth, Crowded Cities Present Challenges in the Philippines', in *Population Reference Bureau*. Population Reference Bureau, 12-04-10.
- Comaroff, J & Comaroff, J 1991, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

- Connerton, P 1989, *How Societies Remember*, Cambridge University Press, New York; Port Chester; Melbourne; Sydney.
- Constable, N 2007, *Maid to Order in Hong Kong: Stories of Migrant Workers*, Cornell University Press, New York.
- Constable, N 2006, 'Brides, Maids, and Prostitutes: Reflections on the Study of 'Trafficked' Women', *PORTAL Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 1-25.
- Constable, N 2004, 'Changing Filipina Identities and Ambivalent Returns', in LD Long & E Oxfeld (eds), *Coming home? refugees, migrants and those who stayed behind*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Pennsylvania, pp. 104-25.
- Constable, N 2003, *Romance on Global Stage: Penpals, Virtual Ethnography, and "Mail-Order" Marriages*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London.
- Constable, N 1999, 'At Home but Not at Home: Filipina Narratives of Ambivalent Returns', *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 203-28.
- Constable, N 1997a, *Maid to Order in Hong Kong*, Cornell University Press, United States of America.
- Constable, N 1997b, 'Sexuality and discipline among Filipina Domestic workers in Hong Kong', *American Ethnologist*, vol. 24, no. 3, pp. 539-58.
- Constable, N 1996, 'Jealousy, Chastity, and Abuse: Chinese Maids and Foreign Helpers in Hong Kong', *Modern China*, vol. 22, no. 4, pp. 448-79.
- Constantino, R 1975, *A History of the Philippines: From the Spanish Colonization to the Second World War*, Monthly Review Press, New York and London.
- Cooke, B 2007, 'Preface: Secularism in New Zealand', in *The Secular Trend in New Zealand*, NZ Association of Rationalists & Humanists and the Humanist Trust, Wellington, New Zealand, pp. 13-28.

- Corpuz, OD 1965, *The Philippines*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.
- Crain, MM 1997, 'The Remaking of an Andalusian Pilgrimage Tradition: Debates Regarding Visual (Re)presentation and the Meanings of "Locality" in a Global Era', in A Gupta & J Ferguson (eds), *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*, Duke University Press, Durham and London pp. 291-311.
- Crouch, M & O'Neill, G 2000, 'Sustaining identities? Prolegomena for Inquiry into Contemporary Foodways', *Social Science Information*, no. 39, p. 181.
- Crumrine, NR 1982, 'Praying and Feasting: Modern Guamanian Fiestas', *Anthropos*, vol. 77, no. 1/2, pp. 89-112.
- Cruz, GT 2006, 'Faith on the Edge: Religion and Women in the Context of Migration', *Feminist Theology*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 9-25.
- Cuba, L & Hummon, DM 1993, 'Constructing a Sense of Home: Place Affiliation and Migration across the Life Cycle', *Sociological Forum*, vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 547-72.
- Cuevas-Hewitt, M 2010, 'The Figure of 'Fil-Whatever': Filipino American Trans-Pacific Social Movements and the Rise of Radical Cosmopolitanism', *World Anthropologies Network* no. 5, pp. 97-127.
- Cunliffe, D 2007, 'Immigration Law for a Changing World', in *LexisNexis Immigration Law Conference*. Labour Party, Heritage Hotel, Auckland, NZ, August 8, 2007.
- Cushner, NP 1971, *Spain in the Philippines: From Conquest to Revolution*, Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City, Philippines
- Dakin, J 2007, *The Secular Trend in New Zealand*, NZ Association of Rationalists & Humanists and the Humanist Trust, Wellington, New Zealand.
- Dancel, F 2005, '*Utang na Loob* [Debt of Goodwill]: A Philosophical Analysis', in RM Gripaldo (ed.), *Filipino Cultural Traits: Cultural*

*Heritage and Contemporary Change Series IIID Claro R. Cerniza Lectures*, vol. 4, The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, Washington, D. C. , pp. 109- 28.

Dawkins, N 2009, 'The Hunger for Home: Nostalgic Affect, Embodied Memory and the Sensual Politics of Transnational Foodways', *Undergraduate Journal of Anthropology*, no. 1, pp. 33-42.

Dayal, S 1996, 'Diaspora and Double Consciousness', *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, vol. 29, no. 1, pp. 46-62.

De Artieda, D [1573] 1973, 'Relation of the Western Islands Called Filipinas', in EH Blair & JA Roberson (eds), *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1803*, vol. III - 1569-1576, Cachos Hermanos, Inc., Mandaluyong, Rizal, Philippines pp. 190-208.

De Certeau, M 1984, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, University of California Press, Berkeley; Los Angeles; London.

De La Peña, C & Lawrance, BN 2011, 'Introduction: Traversing the Local/Global and Food/Culture Divides', *Food and Foodways*, no. 19, pp. 1-10.

De Mesa, JM 2000, 'Primal Religion and Popular Religiosity', *East Asian Pastoral Review*, vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 73-82;  
<http://eapi.admu.edu.ph/eapr00/mesa.htm>

De Mesa, JM 1979, *And God Said "Bahala Na!": The Theme of Providence in the Lowland Filipino Context*, Maryhill School of Theology, Quezon City.

Del Rosario, TC 2008, 'Bridal Diaspora: Migration and Marriage among Filipino Women', in R Palriwala & P Uberoi (eds), *Marriage, Migration and Gender*, Sage, New Delhi; Thousand Oaks; London; Singapore, pp. 78-97.

Del Rosario, TC 2005, 'Bridal Diaspora: Migration and Marriage among Filipino Women', *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, vol. 12, no. 2&3, pp. 253-73.

- Dench, A 2005, *Essential Dates: A Timeline of New Zealand History*, Random House, Auckland, New Zealand.
- Dilip, R, Mohapatra, S & Silwal, A 2009, *Migration and Development Brief 2009*, World Bank, New York.
- Djuric, I 2003, 'The Croatian Diaspora in North America: Identity, Ethnic Solidarity, and the Formation of a "Transnational National Community"', *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, vol. 17, no. 113-130
- Douglas, M 1972, 'Deciphering a Meal', *Daedalus*, vol. 101, no. 1, pp. 61-81.
- Dunn, KE 2005, 'A Paradigm of Transnationalism for Migration Studies', *New Zealand Population Review*, vol. 31, no. 2, pp. 15-31.
- Durkheim, E 1915, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, George Allen and Unwin, Ltd.; The MacMillan Company, London and New York.
- Eades, J 1987, 'Anthropologists and Migrants: Changing Models and Realities', in J Eades (ed.), *Migrants, Workers, and the Social Order* Tavistock Publications, London and New York, pp. 1-16.
- Eaton, D 2008, 'Peters slams migrant policy', *The Press*, National, 25 October 2008
- Eaton, D 2007, 'Kiwi values to be taught', *The Press*, News, March 22, 2007, p. 1.
- Ebaugh, HR 2002, 'Return of the Sacred: Reintegrating Religion in the Social Sciences', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 41, no. 3, pp. 385-95.
- Edin, P-A, Fredriksson, P & Aslund, O 2003, 'Ethnic Enclaves and the Economic Success of Immigrants - Evidence from a Natural Experiment', *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, pp. 329-57.
- Edwards, ME 2011, 'Virginia Ham: The Local and Global of Colonial Foodways', *Food and Foodways*, vol. 19, no. 1-2, pp. 56-73.

- Ehret, C 2010, *History and the Testimony of Language*, University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Eiesland, NL 2000, 'Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Migration', *Sociology of Religion*, vol. 61, no. 2, pp. 231-2.
- Enriquez, VG 1986, 'Kapwa: A Core Concept in Filipino Social Psychology', in VG Enriquez (ed.), *Philippine World-View*, Southeast Asian Studies Program, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, pp. 6-19.
- Escobar, M 1992, 'A Rural Economy and the Overseas Connection', in R Pertierra (ed.), *Remittances and Returnees: The Cultural Economy of Migration in Ilocos*, New Day Publishers, Quezon City, pp. 57-77.
- Espiritu, YL 1996, 'Colonial Oppression, Labour Importation, and Group Formation: Filipinos in the United States', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 29-48.
- Evans-Pritchard, EE 1976, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- Evans-Pritchard, EE 1962, *Social Anthropology and Other Essays*, Free Press, New York.
- Faier, L 2007, 'Filipina Migrants in Rural Japan and their Professions of Love', *American Ethnologist*, vol. 34, no. 1, pp. 148-62.
- Faist, T 2000, 'Transnationalization in International Migration: Implications for the Study of Citizenship and Culture', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 189-222.
- Fajardo, KB 2007, 'Translating Filipino and Filipino American Tomboy Masculinities Through Global Migration and Seafaring', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, vol. 14, no. 2-3, pp. 403-24.
- Feher, S 1998, 'From the Rivers of Babylon to the Valleys of Los Angeles: The Exodus and Adaptation of Iranian Jews', in SR Warner & JG Wittner (eds), *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, pp. 71-94.

- Ferguson, J 2001, 'Global Disconnect: Abjection and the Aftermath of Modernism', in JX Inda & R Rosaldo (eds), *The Anthropology of Globalization: A Reader*, Blackwell Publishers, Massachusetts and Oxford, pp. 136-53.
- Ferguson, J 1997, 'The Country and the City on the Copperbelt', in A Gupta & J Ferguson (eds), *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*, Duke University Press, Durham and London pp. 137-54.
- Fernandes, L 2004, 'Gender and Labor in Comparative Historical Perspective', *Journal of Women's History*, vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 207-16.
- Fernandez, J 2003, 'Emergence and Convergence in some African Sacred Places', in SM Low & D Lawrence-Zuñiga (eds), *The Anthropology of Space and Place*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, pp. 187-203.
- Fernandez, D 1986, 'Food and the Filipino', in VG Enriquez (ed.), *Philippine World-View*, Southeast Asian Studies Program, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, pp. 20-44.
- Fernandez, DG & Castillo, PL 2002, 'The Filipino Meal: Swift, Slow; Sweet, Sour; Adazzle, Dim', in H Walker (ed.), *The Meal: Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 2001*, Prospect Books, Oxford, pp. 85-8.
- Figer, RC 2009, 'I am P/Ninoy: Filipino Diaspora, Technology and Network Nationalism', *Journal of Global Communication*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 264-78.
- Finke, R & Stark, R 1988, 'Religious Economies and Sacred Canopies: Religious Mobilization in American Cities, 1906', *American Sociological Review*, vol. 53, no. 1, pp. 41-9.
- Firth, R 1973, *Symbols Public and Private*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London.
- Fleras, A 1985, 'From Social Control Towards Political Self-Determination? Maori Seats and the Politics of Separate Maori Representation in New Zealand', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 551-76.

- Forero, O & Smith, G 2010, 'The reproduction of 'Cultural Taste' amongst the Ukrainian Diaspora in Bradford, England', *The Sociological Review*, vol. 58, no. Supplement s2, pp. 78-96.
- Fortes, M 1960, 'Oedipus and Job in West African Religion', in C Leslie (ed.), *Anthropology of Folk Religion*, Vintage Books, New York, pp. 5-49.
- Fox, RB 1967, 'Excavations in the Tabon Cave and Some Problems in Philippine Chronology', in *Studies in Philippine Anthropology (In Honor of H. Otley Beyer)*, Alemar Phoenix Publishers, Quezon City, Philippines, pp. 88-116.
- Francisco, JJ 2003, *Barriers to the Temporary Migration of Filipino Service Providers*, World Bank, Washington, DC.
- French, C & Lam, YM 1988, 'Migration and Job Satisfaction: A Logistic Regression Analysis of Satisfaction of Filipina Domestic Workers in Hong Kong', *Social Indicators Research*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 79-90.
- Fresnosa-Flot, A 2010, 'The Catholic Church in the Lives of Irregular Migrant Filipinas in France: Identity Formation, Empowerment and Social Control', *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 345-61.
- Fresnoza-Flot, A 2009, 'Migration Status and Transnational Mothering: The Case of Filipino Migrants in France', *Global Networks*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 252-70.
- Fresnosa-Flot, A & Pecoud, A 2007, 'Emergence of Entrepreneurship Among Filipino Migrants in Paris', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 1-28.
- Friedman, J 2001, 'Globalization and Localization', in JX Inda & R Rosaldo (eds), *The Anthropology of Globalization: A Reader*, Blackwell Publishers, Massachusetts and Oxford, pp. 233-46.
- Frost, N 2008, "'Strange People But They Sure Can Cook!': An Indonesian Women's Group in Sydney", *Food, Culture & Society*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 174-89.



- Ganesan, N 2002, 'Malaysia in 2002: Political Consolidation amid Change?', *Asian Survey*, vol. 43, no. 1, pp. 147-55.
- Gardaphé, FL & Xu, W 2007, 'Introduction: Food in Multi-Ethnic Literatures', *MELUS*, vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 5-10.
- Gee, GC, Chen, J, Spencer, MS, See, S, Kuester, OA, Tran, D & Takeuchi, D 2006, 'Social Support as a Buffer for Perceived Unfair Treatment Among Filipino Americans: Differences Between San Francisco and Honolulu', *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 96, no. 4, pp. 677-84.
- Geertz, C 1986, 'Making Experiences, Authoring Selves', in V Turner & EM Bruner (eds), *The Anthropology of Experience*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, pp. 373-80.
- Geertz, C 1976, "'From the Native's Point of View": On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding', in KH Basso & HA Selby (eds), *Meaning in Anthropology*, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, New Mexico, pp. 221-37.
- Geertz, C 1973, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, New York.
- Geertz, C 1957, 'Ethos, World-View and the Analysis of Sacred Symbols', *The Antioch Review*, vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 421-37.
- George, S 1998, 'Caroling with the Keralites: The Negotiation of Gendered Space in an Indian Immigrant Church ', in SR Warner & JG Wittner (eds), *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, pp. 265-94.
- Gibson, K & Graham, J 1986, 'Situating migrants in Theory: The Case of Filipino Migrant Contract Construction Workers', *Capital & Class*, no. 10, pp. 130-49.
- Gibson, K, Law, L & McKay, D 2001, 'Beyond Heroes and Victims: Filipina Contract Migrants, Economic Activism and Class Transformations', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 365-86.

- Gieryn, TF 2000, 'A Space for Place in Sociology', *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 26, pp. 463-96.
- Glick-Schiller, N, Basch, I & Blanc-Szanton, C (eds.) 1992, *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity and Nationalism Reconsidered*, New York Academy of Science, New York.
- Gluckman, M 1962, *The Ritual of Social Relations*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.
- Go, SP 2006, 'Country Report: Recent Trend in International Movements and Policies: The Philippines, 2005', in *Workshop on International Migration and Labour Markets in Asia*. Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training (JILPT), Tokyo, Japan, February 17, 2006.
- Gonzalez, JLI 1998, *Philippine Labour Migration: Critical Dimensions of Public Policy*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore.
- Gonzalez, MJ 1999, 'Dual or Duel Fiesta System? The Politics of Identity in Southern Mexico', *Wicazo Sa Review*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 165-76.
- Gorospe, V 1994, 'Understanding the Filipino Value System', in MBJ Dy (ed.), *Valujes in Philippine Culture and Education*, vol. 7, Office of Research and Publications and The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy Washington, D. C., pp. 63-70.
- Green, N 1995, 'Looking at the Landscape: Class Formation and the Visual', in E Hirsch & M O'Hanlon (eds), *The Anthropology of Landscape*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, pp. 31-42.
- Gripaldo, RM 2005, 'Bahala Na [Come What May]: A Philosophical Analysis', in RM Gripaldo (ed.), *Filipino Cultural Traits: Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change Series IIID Claro R. Cerniza Lectures*, vol. 4, The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, Washington, D. C., pp. 203-19.
- Guarnizo, LE, Portes, A & Haller, W 2003, 'Assimilation and Transnationalism: Determinants of Transnational Political Action Among Contemporary Migrants', *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 108, no. 6, pp. 1211-48.

- Guarnizo, LE & Smith, MP 1998, 'The Locations of Transnationalism', in MP Smith & LE Guarnizo (eds), *Transnationalism From Below*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick.
- Gupta, A 1997, 'Song of the Nonaligned World', in A Gupta & J Ferguson (eds), *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*, Duke University Press, Durham and London pp. 179-99.
- Gupta, A & Ferguson, J 2001, 'Beyond "Culture": Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference', in JX Inda & R Rosaldo (eds), *The Anthropology of Globalization: A Reader*, Blackwell Publishers, Massachusetts and Oxford, pp. 65-80.
- Gupta, A & Ferguson, J 1997a, 'Culture, Power, Place: Ethnography at the End of an Era', in A Gupta & J Ferguson (eds), *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*, Duke University Press, Durham and London pp. 1-29.
- Gupta, A & Ferguson, J 1997b, 'Discipline and Practice: "The Field as Site, Method, and Location in Anthropology', in A Gupta & J Ferguson (eds), *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*, University of California Press, Berkeley; Los Angeles; London, pp. 1-46.
- Gupta, A & Ferguson, J 1992, 'Beyond "Culture": Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference', *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 6-23.
- Gurowitz, A 2000, 'Migrant Rights and Activism in Malaysia: Opportunities and Constraints', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 59, no. 4, pp. 863-88.
- Hagan, J & Ebaugh, HR 2003, 'Calling Upon the Sacred: Migrants' Use of Religion in the Migration Process ', *The International Migration Review*, vol. 37, no. 4, pp. 1145-62.
- Hage, G 2009, 'Anthropology and the Passion of the Political'. SlowTV, 20 February 2011.
- Hage, G 2005, 'A Not so Multi-sited Ethnography of a Not so Imagined Community', *Anthropological Theory*, vol. 5, no. 4, pp. 463-75.

- Hage, G 2003, *Against Paranoid Nationalism*, The Merlin Press Ltd, United Kingdom, Europe and Canada.
- Hage, G 2001, 'Beyond the Intention of the State: A Response to Burchell', *Ethnicities*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 245-9.
- Hage, G 1998, *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society*, Pluto Press Australia and Comerford and Miller Publishers, Anandale, NSW and Kent, UK.
- Hage, G 1997, 'At Home in the Entrails of the West: Multiculturalism, Ethnic Food and Migrant Home-building', in H Grace, G Hage, L Johnson, J Langsworth & M Symonds (eds), *Home/World: Space, Community and Marginality in Sydney's West*, Pluto Press Sydney, pp. 99-153.
- Hall, S 1990, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', in J Rutherford (ed.), *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, pp. 222-37.
- Hall, S 1995, 'New Cultures for Old', in D Massey & P Jess (eds), *A Place in the World? Places, Cultures and Globalization*, Oxford University Press; The Open University, Oxford; New York, pp. 175-211.
- Hanifan, LJ 1916, 'The Rural School Community Center', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, no. 67, pp. 130-8.
- Hannerz, U 2010, 'Diversity Is Our Business', *American Anthropologist*, vol. 112, no. 4, pp. 539-51.
- Hannerz, U 2001, 'Notes on the Global Ecumene', in JX Inda & R Rosaldo (eds), *The Anthropology of Globalization: A Reader*, Blackwell Publishers, Massachusetts and Oxford, pp. 37-45.
- Hannerz, U 1996, *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places*, Routledge, London and New York.
- Hanson, A 1989, 'The Making of the Maori: Culture Invention and Its Logic', *American Anthropologist New Series*, vol. 91, no. 4, pp. 890-902.

- Harbottle, L [2000] 2004, *Food for Health, Food for Wealth: Ethnic and Gender Identities in British Iranian Communities*, Berghahn, United States.
- Hardin, R 1997, 'The Economics of Religious Belief', *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics*, vol. 154, no. 1, pp. 259-78.
- Harris, M 1987, 'Foodways: Historical Overview and Theoretical Prolegomenon', in M Harris & EB Ross (eds), *Food and Evolution: Toward a Theory of Human Food Habits*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, pp. 57-90.
- Harvey, D 2006, 'The Political Economy of Public Space', in S Low & N Smith (eds), *The Politics of Public Space*, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, New York; London, pp. 17-34.
- Hastrup, K & Olwig, KF 1997, 'Introduction', in KF Olwig & K Hastrup (eds), *Siting Culture: The Shifting Anthropological Object*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 1-14.
- Hatton, T & Williamson, JG 2008, *Global Migration and the World Economy*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England
- Hawthorne, L 2001, 'The Globalisation of the Nursing Workforce: Barriers Confronting Qualified Nurses in Australia', *Nursing Inquiry* vol. 8, no. 4 pp. 213-29.
- Henderson, L 2007, '"Ebony Jr!" and "Soul Food": The Construction of Middle-Class African American Identity through the Use of Traditional Southern Foodways', *Melus*, vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 81-97.
- Hepner, RL 1998, 'The House that Rasta Built: Church-Building and Fundamentalism Among New York Rastafarians', in SR Warner & JG Wittner (eds), *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, pp. 197-234.
- Hermanowicz, JC & Morgan, HP 1999, 'Ritualizing the Routine: Collective Identity Affirmation', *Sociological Forum*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 197-214.

- Highmore, B 2009, 'The Taj Mahal in the High Street: The Indian Restaurant As Diasporic Popular Culture In Britain', *Food, Culture & Society*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 174-90.
- Hilsdon, A-M & Giridharan, B 2008, 'Racialised Sexualities: The case of Filipina migrant workers in East Malaysia', *Gender, Place & Culture*, vol. 15, no. 6, pp. 611-28.
- Hirsch, E 1995, 'Introduction: Landscape: Between Place and Space', in E Hirsch & M O'Hanlon (eds), *The Anthropology of Landscape*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, pp. 1-30.
- Hirst, P 1997, 'The Global Economy - Myths and Realities', *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, vol. 73, no. 3, pp. 409-25.
- Hirst, P & Thompson, G 1996, *Globalisation in Question*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Hollnsteiner, MR 1970, 'Reciprocity in the Lowland Philippines', in F Lynch & AdG II (eds), *Four Readings on Philippine Values*, vol. 2, Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City, Philippines, pp. 65-88.
- Holy, L 1984, 'Theory, Methodology and the Research Process', in RF Ellen (ed.), *Ethnographic Research: A guide to General Conduct*, Academic Press Limited, London; San Diego CA, pp. 13-34.
- Huang, S, Yeoh, BSA & Jackson, RT 2004, 'Domestic Workers and Transnational Migration: Perspectives from the Philippines and Singapore', in R Elmhirst & R Saptari (eds), *Labour in Southeast Asia: Local processes in a globalised world*, Routledge and Curzon; International Institute of Social History, London and New York; Amsterdam, pp. 329-58.
- Huang, S & Yeoh, BSA 2003, 'The Difference Gender Makes: State Policy and Contract Migrant Workers in Singapore', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, vol. 12, no. 1-2, pp. 75-97.
- Huang, S & Yeoh, BSA 1996, 'Ties That Bind: State Policy and Migrant Female Domestic Helpers in Singapore', *Geoforum*, vol. 27, no. 4, pp. 479-93.

- Huang, S, Yeoh, BSA & Asis, MMB 2003, 'Filipino Domestic Workers in Singapore: Impacts on Family Well-being and Gender Relations', in *ESCAP Expert Group Meeting on Migration and Development*, Bangkok, pp. 93, 27-29 August 2003.
- Huang, S, Yeoh, BSA & Jackson, RT 2004, 'Domestic Workers and Transnational Migration: Perspectives from the Philippines and Singapore', in R Elmhirst & R Saptari (eds), *Labour in Southeast Asia: Local processes in a Globalised World*, Routledge and Curzon; International Institute of Social History, London and New York; Amsterdam, pp. 329-58.
- Huang, S, Yeoh, BSA & Lam, T 2008, 'Asian Transnational Families in Transition: The Liminality of Simultaneity', *International Migration*, vol. 46, no. 4.
- Hui, W-T 1997, 'Regionalization, Economic Restructuring and Labour Migration in Singapore', *International Migration*, vol. 35, no. 1, pp. 109-30.
- Humphrey, C 1995, 'Chiefly and Shamanist Landscapes in Mongolia', in E Hirsch & M O'Hanlon (eds), *The Anthropology of Landscape*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, pp. 135-62.
- Hutterer, KL 1977, 'Prehistoric Trade and the Evolution of Philippine Societies: A Reconsideration', in KL Hutterer (ed.), *Economic Exchange and Social Interaction in Southeast Asia: Perspectives from Prehistory, History, and Ethnography*, vol. 13, Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, pp. 177-96.
- Ignacio, EN 2000, 'Ain't I a Filipino (Woman)?': An Analysis of Authorship/Authority through the Construction of "Filipina" on the Net', *The Sociological Quarterly*, vol. 41, no. 4, pp. 551-72.
- Ignacio, EN 2005, *Building Diaspora: Filipino Cultural Formation on the Internet*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London.

- Ileto, RC [1979] 2008, *Pasyon and Revolution, Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910*, Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City, Philippines.
- Ileto, RC 1998, *Filipinos and Their Revolution, Event, Discourse and Historiography*, Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City, Philippines.
- Inda, JX & Rosaldo, R 2001, 'Introduction: A World in Motion', in JX Inda & R Rosaldo (eds), *The Anthropology of Globalization: A Reader*, Blackwell Publishers, Massachusetts and Oxford, pp. 1-34.
- Ip, M 2003, 'Chinese Immigrants and Transnationals in New Zealand: A Fortress Opened', in LJC Ma & C Cartier (eds), *The Chinese Diaspora: Space, Place, Mobility, and Identity*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., Maryland, U.S.A., pp. 339-58.
- Ip, M 1996, *Dragons on the long white cloud: the making of Chinese New Zealanders*, Tandem Press, North Shore City, NZ.
- Ip, M & Murphy, N 2005, *Aliens At My Table: Asians as New Zealanders see them*, Penguin Books, Auckland, NZ.
- Iredale, R 1999, 'The Need to Import Skilled Personnel: Factors Favouring and Hindering its International Mobility', *International Migration*, vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 89-123.
- Iredale, R 2001, 'The Migration of Professionals: Theories and Typologies ', *International Migration*, vol. 39, no. 5, pp. 7-26.
- Itzigsohn, J 2000, 'Immigration and the Boundaries of Citizenship: The Institutions of Immigrants' Political Transnationalism', *International Migration Review*, vol. 34, no. 4, pp. 1126-54.
- Itzigsohn, J & Saucedo, SG 2002, 'Immigrant Incorporation and Sociocultural Transnationalism', *International Migration Review*, vol. 36, no. 3, pp. 766-98.
- Iyer, A, Devasahayam, TW & Yeoh, BS 2004, 'A Clean Bill of Health: Filipinas as Domestic Workers in Singapore', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 11-38.



- Jacobsen, FB & Bland, RL 1997, 'The Sissauch Dance', *Arctic Anthropology*, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 28-44.
- James, A 1997, 'How British is British Food?', in P Caplan (ed.), *Food, Health and Identity*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 71-86.
- James, R 2004, 'Introduction Halal Pizza: Food and Culture in a Busy World', *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 1-11.
- Jess, P & Massey, D 1995, 'The contestation of place', in D Massey & P Jess (eds), *A Place in the World? Places, Cultures and Globalization*, Oxford University Press; The Open University, Oxford; New York, pp. 133-74.
- Jocano, FL 1998, *Filipino Social Organization: Traditional Kinship and Family Organization*, PUNLAD Research House, Metro Manila, Philippines.
- Jocano, FL 1981, *Folk Christianity: A preliminary study of conversion and patterning of Christian experience in the Philippines*, Trinity Research Institute, Trinity College of Quezon City, Cathedral Heights, Quezon City, Philippines.
- Jocano, FL 1969, *Growing Up In A Philippine Barrio*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York; Chicago; San Francisco; Atlanta; Dallas; Montreal; Toronto; London; Sydney.
- Johnson, IM, Hallberg, LR-M & Gustafsson, I-B 2002, 'Cultural foodways in Sweden: Repeated Focus Group Interviews with Somalian Women', *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 328-39.
- Johnson, L, Langsworth, J & Symonds, M 1997, 'Introduction', in H Grace, G Hage, L Johnson, J Langsworth & M Symonds (eds), *Home/World: Space, Community and Marginality in Sydney's West*, Pluto Press Sydney, pp. 1-30.
- Johnson, M & Werbner, P 2010, 'Diasporic Encounters, Sacred Journeys: Ritual, Normativity and the Religious Imagination Among International Asian Migrant Women', *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 11, no. 3-4, pp. 205-18.

- Johnston, TF 1975, 'Alaskan Eskimo Dance in Cultural Context', *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 1-11.
- Johnston, R, Forrest, J & Poulsen, M 2002, 'Are there Ethnic Enclaves/Ghettos in English Cities', *Urban Studies*, vol. 39, no. 4, pp. 591-618.
- Johnston, R, Trlin, A, Henderson, A & North, N 2006, 'Sustaining and Creating Migration Chains Among Skilled Immigrant Groups: Chinese, Indians and South Africans in New Zealand', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 32, no. 7, pp. 1227-50.
- Johnston, TF 1975, 'Alaskan Eskimo Dance in Cultural Context', *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 1-11.
- Jones, P & Kryżanowski, M 2008, 'Identity, Belonging and Migration: Beyond Constructing "Others"', in G Delanty, R Wodak & P Jones (eds), *Identity, Belonging and Migration*.
- Judge, PS 2003, 'Social Construction of Identity in a Multicultural State: Sikhs in Canada', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 38, no. 17, pp. 1725-31.
- Kaeppler, AL 1972, 'Acculturation in Hawaiian Dance', *Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council*, vol. 4, pp. 38-46.
- Kaeppler, AL 1967, 'Folklore as Expressed in the Dance in Tonga', *The Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 80, no. 316, pp. 160-8.
- Kalčík, S 1984, 'Ethnic Foodways in America: Symbol and the Performance of Identity', in LK Brown & K Mussell (eds), *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States: The Performance of Group Identity*, The University of Tennessee Press, Tennessee, USA, pp. 37-65.
- Kapferer, B 1983, *A Celebration of Demons: Exorcism and the Aesthetics of Healing in Sri Lanka*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana.
- Kapferer, B 1979, 'Mind, Self and Other in Demonic Illness: The Negation and Reconstruction of Self', *American Ethnologist*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 110-33.

- Kearney, M 1995, 'The Local and the Global: The Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 24, pp. 547-65.
- Kelly, P 2007, *Filipino Migration, Transnationalism and Class Identity* National University of Singapore, Singapore, 90.
- Kent, EF 2009, "'What's Written on the Forehead Will Never Fail': Karma, Fate, and Headwriting in Indian Folktales', *Asian Ethnology*, vol. 68, no. 1, pp. 1-26.
- Kepel, G 1994, *The Revenge of God: The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in the Modern World*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Pennsylvania.
- King, M [1997] 2001, *Nga Iwi O Te Motu: 1000 Years of Maori History*, Reed, Auckland, New Zealand.
- King, M & Walter, I 1977, *New Zealand: Its Land and its People*, Reed, Wellington.
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B 1994, 'Spaces of Dispersal', *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 339-44.
- Kline, DS 2003, 'Push and Pull Factors in International Nurse Migration', *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, vol. 35, no. 2, p. 107.
- Koc, M & Welsh, J 2001, 'Food, Foodways and Immigrant Experience', in *Multiculturalism Program, Department of Canadian Heritage at the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association Conference*. Centre for Studies in Food Security, Toronto, Canada, pp. 1-15, November
- Kolig, E 2009, 'Islam and Orientalism in New Zealand: The Challenges of Multiculturalism, Human Rights and National Security - and the Return of the Xenophobes', in E Kolig, VS Angeles & S Wong (eds), *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Globalism in Asia*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, pp. 219-40.
- Kraut, A 2003, 'Between Primitivism and Diaspora: The Dance Performances of Josephine Baker, Zora Neale Hurston, and Katherine Dunham', *Theatre Journal*, vol. 55, no. 3, pp. 433-50.

- Kravva, V 2001, 'Food as a Vehicle for Remembering: The Case of the Thessalonikan Jews', in H Walker (ed.), *Food and Memory: Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 2000*, Prospect Books Oxford, England, pp. 136-44.
- Kroeber, AL 1919, *Peoples of the Philippines*, American Museum of National History
- Kroeber, AL 1923, *Anthropology*, George G. Harrap & Co., Ltd., London; Calcutta; Sydney.
- Kurath, GP 1960, 'Panorama of Dance Ethnology', *Current Anthropology*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 233-54.
- Kurien, P 1998, 'Becoming Americans by Becoming Hindu: Indian Americans Take Their Place at the Multicultural Table', in SR Warner & JG Wittner (eds), *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, pp. 37-70.
- Laidlaw, J & Whitehouse, H 2007, 'Introduction', in H Whitehouse & J Laidlaw (eds), *Religion, Anthropology and Cognitive Science*, Carolina Academic Press, Durham, N.C.
- Lahneman, WJ 2005, *Impact of Diaspora Communities on National and Global Politics*, Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland, University of Maryland.
- Lan, P-C 2006, *Global Cinderellas: Migrant Domestic Workers and the Newly Rich Employers in Taiwan*, Duke University Press, Durham and London.
- Lan, P-C 2005, 'Surrogate Family, Disposable Labour and Stratified Others: Transnational Domestic Workers in Taiwan', in S Huang, BSA Yeoh & NA Rahman (eds), *Asian Women as Transnational Domestic Workers*, Marshall Cavendish Academic, London; New York; Beijing; Bangkok; Kuala Lumpur; Singapore, pp. 210-32.
- Lan, P-C 2003a, 'Maid or Madam? Filipino Migrant Workers and the Continuity of Domestic Labor', *Gender and Society*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 187-208.

- Lan, P-C 2003b, 'Negotiating Social Boundaries and Private Zones: The Micropolitics of Employing Migrant Domestic Workers', *Social Problems*, vol. 50, no. 4, pp. 525-49.
- Lapson, D 1963, 'Jewish Dances of Eastern and Central Europe', *Journal of the International Folk Music Council* vol. 15, pp. 58-61.
- Larkin, JA 1982, 'Philippine History Reconsidered: A Socioeconomic Perspective', *The American Historical Review*, vol. 87, no. 3, pp. 595-628.
- Latshaw, BA 2009, 'Food for Thought: Race, Region, Identity, and Foodways in the American South', vol. Southern Cultures, pp. 106-28.
- Lauser, A 2008, 'Philippine Women on the Move: Marriage Across Borders', *International Migration*, vol. 46, no. 4, pp. 85-110.
- Lauser, A 2006, 'Philippine Women on the Move: A Transnational Perspective on Marriage Migration', *Internationales Asienforum. International Quarterly for Asian Studies*, vol. 37, no. 3/4, pp. 321-37.
- Lavezaris, G [1574] 1973, 'Slavery Among the Natives', in EH Blair & JA Robertson (eds), *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898*, vol. III, Cacho Hermanos, Inc., Mandaluyong, Rizal, Philippines, pp. 286-9.
- Law, L 2001, 'Home Cooking: Filipino Women and Geographies of the Senses in Hong Kong', *Ecumene*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 264-83.
- Law, L & Nadeau, K 1999, 'Globalization, Migration and Class Struggles: NGO Mobilization for Filipino Domestic Workers', *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies*, vol. 14, no. 3, pp. 51-68.
- Lawless, R 2005, 'Philippine Diaspora', in *Encyclopedia of Diasporas*, eds. M Ember, CR Ember & I Skoggard, Boston.
- Leckie, J 2007, *Indian Settlers: The Story of a New Zealand South Asian Community*, Otago University Press, Dunedin, New Zealand.

- Lee, R 2004, 'Theorizing Diasporas: Three Types of consciousness', in RBH Goh & S Wong (eds), *Asian Diasporas: Cultures, Identities, Representations*, Hongkong University Press, Hong Kong, pp. 53-76.
- Lee, K-H 2001, 'Epitome of Korean Folk Dance', in A Dils & AC Albright (eds), *Moving History / Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader*, Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, Connecticut, pp. 174-7.
- Legazpi, MLd [1567-68] 1973, 'Relation of the Filipinas Islands and of the Character and Condition of Their Inhabitants', in EH Blair & JA Robertson (eds), *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898*, vol. III, Cacho Hermanos, Inc., Mandaluyong, Rizal, Philippines pp. 54-66.
- León, L 1998, 'Born Again in East LA: The Congregation as Border Space', in SR Warner & JG Wittner (eds), *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, pp. 163-96.
- LeRoy, JA 1903, 'The Friars in the Philippines', *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 18, no. 4, pp. 657-80.
- Levi-Strauss, C 1988, *The Jealous Potter*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago; London (U.K.).
- Levitt, P 1998a, 'Local-Level Global Religion: The Case of U.S.-Dominican Migration ', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 74-89.
- Levitt, P 1998b, 'Social remittances: Migration driven local-level forms of cultural diffusion', *The International Migration Review*, vol. 32, no. 4, p. 926.
- Lian, KF 1987, 'Interpreting Maori History: A Case for Historical Sociology ', *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, vol. 96, no. 4, pp. 445-71.
- Liebelt, C 2011, *Caring For The 'Holy Land' Filipina Domestic Workers in Israel*, Berghahn, Oxford.
- Liebelt, C 2010, 'Becoming Pilgrims in the Holy Land: On Filipina Domestic Workers' Struggles and Pilgrimages for a Cause in Israel', *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 245-67.

- Liebelt, C 2008, "“We are the Jews of Today”: Filipino Domestic Workers in Israel and the Language of Diaspora', *HAGAR Studies in Culture, Polity and Identities*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 105-28.
- Limcangco, T 2010, 'The Angono Petroglyph'. *Artes de las Filipinas (The Arts of the Philippines)*, Manila, Philippines.
- Lindsey, CW 1984, 'Economic Crisis in the Philippines ', *Asian Survey*, vol. 24, no. 12, pp. 1185-208.
- Liu, JL, Ong, PM & Rosenstein, C 1991, 'Dual Chain Migration: Post -1965 Filipino Immigration to the United States', *International Migration Review*, vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 487-513.
- Liu, WT, Hutchinson, IW & Hong, LK 1973, 'Conjugal Power and Decision Making: A Methodological Note on Cross-Cultural Study of the Family', *The American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 79, no. 1, pp. 84-98.
- Loarca, Md [1582] 1973, 'Relation of the Filipinas Islands ', in EH Blair & JA Robertson (eds), *The Philippine Islands 1493-1803*, vol. V - 1582-1583, Cachos Hermanos, Inc., Mandaluyong, Rizal, Philippines pp. 35-187.
- Logan, JR, Alba, RD & Stults, BJ 2003, 'Enclaves and Entrepreneurs: Assessing the Payoff for Immigrants and Minorities', *International Migration Review*, vol. 37, no. 2, pp. 344-388, pp. 344-88.
- Lorenzo, FME, Galvez-Tan, J, Icamina, K & Javier, L 2007, 'Nurse Migration from a Source Country Perspective: Philippine Country Case Study', *Health Research and Educational Trust*, vol. 42, no. 3, pp. 1406-18.
- Low, L 1995, 'Population Movement in the Asia Pacific Region: Singapore Perspective', *International Migration Review*, vol. 29, no. 3, pp. 745-64.
- Lovell, N 1998a, 'Emplacement and Transience in Belonging', in N Lovell (ed.), *Locality and Belonging*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 53-77.

- Lovell, N 1998b, 'Introduction: Belonging in Need of Emplacement?', in N Lovell (ed.), *Locality and Belonging*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 1-24.
- Low, SM & Lawrence-Zuniga, D 2003, 'Locating Culture', in SM Low & D Lawrence-Zuniga (eds), *The Anthropology of Space and Place*, vol. ix, 422 p., Blackwell Publishing, Malden, Mass., pp. 1-47.
- Lynch, F [1975] 2004, 'Folk Catholicism in the Philippines ', in A Yengoyan & PQ Makil (eds), *Philippine Society and the Individual: Selected Essays of Frank Lynch*, Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City, Philippines, pp. 207-18.
- Lynch, F [1962] 2004, 'Town Fiesta: An Anthropologist's View', in A Yengoyan & PQ Makil (eds), *Philippine Society and the Individual: Selected Essays of Frank Lynch*, Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City, Philippines, pp. 219-36.
- Lynch, G 2010, 'Object Theory Toward an Intersubjective, Mediated, and Dynamic Theory of Religion ', in D Morgan (ed.), *Religion and Material Culture The Matter of Belief*, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, London and New York, pp. 40-54.
- Lyons, L 2007, 'Dignity Overdue: Women's Rights Activism in Support of Foreign Domestic Workers in Singapore', *Women's Studies Quarterly*, vol. 35, no. 3/4, pp. 106-22.
- Lyons, LT 2004, 'Organizing for Domestic Worker Rights in Singapore: The Limits of Transnationalism', in *Research On Line*, pp. 1-13.
- Ma, LJC 2003, 'Space, Place, and Transnationalism in the Chinese Diaspora', in LJC Ma & C Cartier (eds), *The Chinese Diaspora: Space, Place, Mobility, and Identity*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., Maryland, U.S.A., pp. 1-49.
- Madianou, M & Miller, D 2011a, *Migration and the New Media: Transnational Families and Polymedia*, Routledge, UK.
- Madianou, M & Miller, D 2011b, 'Mobile phone parenting: Reconfiguring Relationships Between Filipina migrant Mothers and their left-behind Children', in *New Media & Society*. Sage, pp. 1-14.



- Magat, M 2007, 'Teachers and 'New Evangelizers' for their Faith: Filipina Domestic Workers at Work in Italy ', *Paedagogica Historica*, vol. 43, no. 4, pp. 603-24.
- Magat, M 2004, 'Women Breadwinners in the Margins: Filipina Domestic Workers in Rome, Italy', in A Fauve-Chamoux (ed.), *Domestic Service and the Formation of European Identity: Understanding the Globalization of Domestic Work, 16th - 21st Centuries*, Peter Lang, Germany, pp. 351-68.
- Majul, CA 1988, 'The Moro Struggle in the Philippines', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 897-922.
- Mallare, ML 2006, 'Mail-Order Brides: A Closer Look at U.S. & Philippine Relations', *Asia Pacific: Perspectives*, vol. VI, no. 1, pp. 13-20.
- Manalansan, MFI 2003, *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora*, Duke University Press, Durham and London.
- Manning, FE 1983, 'Cosmos and Chaos: Celebration in the Modern World', in FE Manning (ed.), *The Celebration of Society: Perspectives on Contemporary Cultural Performance*, Bowling Green University Popular Press; Congress of Social & Humanistic Studies, London; Canada, pp. 3-30.
- Mannur, A 2007, 'Culinary Nostalgia: Authenticity, Nationalism, and Diaspora', *MELUS*, vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 11-31.
- Margold, JA 2004, 'Filipina Depictions of Migrant Life for Their Kin at Home', in LD Long & E Oxfeld (eds), *Coming home? Refugees, Migrants and Those Who Stayed behind*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Pennsylvania, pp. 49-63.
- Margold, JA 1995, 'Narratives of Masculinity and Transnational Migration: Filipino Workers in the Middle East', in A Ong & MG Peletz (eds), *Bewitching Women, Pious Men: Gender and Body Politics in Southeast Asia*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California; London, England, pp. 274-98.
- Marshall, DA 2002, 'Behavior, Belonging, and Belief: A Theory of Ritual Practice', *Sociological Theory*, vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 360-80.

- Marte, L 2008, *Migrant Seasonings: Food Practices, Cultural Memory, and Narratives of 'Home' among Dominican Communities in New York City* University of Texas, Austin, Texas.
- Martin, PL 1993, 'Migration and Trade: The Case of the Philippines', *International Migration Review*, vol. 27, no. 3, pp. 639-45.
- Marx, K [1843-1844] 1970, *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Massey, D 1995, 'The Conceptualization of Place', in D Massey & P Jess (eds), *A Place in the World? Places, Cultures and Globalization*, Oxford University Press; The Open University, Oxford; New York, pp. 45-77.
- Massey, D & Jess, P 1995, 'Places and Cultures in an Uneven World', in D Massey & P Jess (eds), *A Place in the World? Places, Cultures and Globalization*, Oxford University Press; The Open University, Oxford; New York, pp. 215-39.
- Massumi, B 1988, 'Notes on the translation and acknowledgments', in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, The Athlone Press, London, pp. xvi-ix.
- Mateo, IC 2003, 'Nobena, Panata, at Paglalakbay: "Importing" Religious Traditions from the Philippines to Japan', in M Tsuda (ed.), *Filipino Diaspora: Demography, Social Networks, Empowerment and Culture*, Philippine Social Science Council, Quezon City, pp. 91-124.
- Mateo, IC 2000, 'The Church's Nonreligious Roles Among Filipino Catholic Migrants in Tokyo', in CJ-H Macdonald & GM Pesigan (eds), *Old Ties and New Solidarities: Studies on Philippine Communities*, Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City, Philippines, pp. 192-202.
- McAlister, E 1998, 'The Madonna of 115th Street Revisited: Vodou and Haitian Catholicism in the Age of Transnationalism', in SR Warner & JG Wittner (eds), *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, pp. 123-60.

- McAllister, PA 2012, *National Days and the Politics of Indigenous and Local Identities in Australia and New Zealand*, Carolina Academic Press, Durham, North Carolina.
- McAllister, P 2007, 'Waitangi Day: An Annual Enactment of the Treaty', *SITES*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 155-80.
- McAllister, PA 2006, *Xhosa Beer Drinking Rituals: Power, Practice, and Performance in the South African Rural Periphery*, Carolina Academic Press, Durham, N.C.
- McGibbon, I 2005, 'The Defence Dimension', in AL Smith (ed.), *Southeast Asia and New Zealand*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies; New Zealand Institute of International Affairs - Victoria University Press, Singapore and Wellington, pp. 7-31.
- McHugh, PG 1991, *The Maori Magna Carta: New Zealand and the Treaty of Waitangi*, Oxford University Press, Auckland and New York.
- McKay, D 2007, 'Sending Dollars Shows Feeling' - Emotions and Economies in Filipino Migration', *Mobilities*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 175-94.
- McKay, D 2006, 'Translocal Circulation: Place and Subjectivity in an Extended Filipino Community', *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 265-78.
- McKay, D 2005, 'Success Stories? Filipina Migrant Domestic Workers in Canada', in S Huang, BSA Yeoh & NA Rahman (eds), *Asian Women as Transnational Domestic Workers*, Marshall Cavendish Academic, London; New York; Beijing; Bangkok; Kuala Lumpur; Singapore, pp. 305-40.
- McKay, D 2004, 'Performing Identities, Creating Cultures of Circulation: Filipina Migrants Between Home and Abroad', in *15th Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia*, Canberra, 29 June-2 July 2004.
- McKay, D 2003a, 'Cultivating New Local Futures: Remittance Economies and Land-Use Patterns in Ifugao, Philippines', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 285-306.

- McKay, D 2003b, 'Filipinas in Canada - De-skilling as a Push Toward Marriage', in N Piper & M Roces (eds), *Wife or Workers? Asian Women and Migration*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., United States of America, pp. 23-52.
- McKay, SC 2007a, 'Filipino Sea Men: Constructing Masculinities in an Ethnic Labour Niche', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 33, no. 4, pp. 617-33.
- McKay, SC 2007b, 'Filipino Sea Men: Identity and Masculinity in a Global Labor Niche', in RS Parrenas & LCD Siu (eds), *Asian Diasporas: New Formations, New Conceptions*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, pp. 63-84.
- Medina, BTG 2001, *The Filipino Family*, Second edn, University of the Philippines Press, Diliman, Quezon City.
- Miller, KD 2002, 'Competitive Strategies of Religious Organizations', *Strategic Management Journal*, vol. 23, no. 5, pp. 435-56.
- Mintz, S 2008, 'Food and Diaspora', *Food, Culture & Society*, vol. 11, no. 4, pp. 510-23.
- Mintz, S & Bois, CMD 2002, 'The Anthropology of Food and Eating', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 31, pp. 99-119.
- Mitchell, D & Staeheli, LA 2006, 'Introduction: The Imperative of Public Space', in S Low & N Smith (eds), *The Politics of Public Space*, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, New York; London, pp. 143-75.
- Mochrie, RI, Sawkins, JW & Naumov, A 2008, 'Competition and Participation in Religious Markets: Evidence from Victorian Scotland', *Review of Social Economy*, vol. 66, no. 4, pp. 437-67.
- Monaghan, J 1996, 'Fiesta Finance in Mesoamerica and the Origins of a Gift Exchange System', *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 499-516.
- Montgomery, JD 2003, 'A Formalization and Test of the Religious Economies Model', *American Sociological Review*, vol. 68, no. 5, pp. 782-809.

- Moore, SF & Myerhoff, BG 1977, 'Introduction: Secular Ritual', in SF Moore & BG Myerhoff (eds), *Secular Ritual*, Van Gorcum, Assen, Amsterdam, pp. 3-24.
- Morga, Ad [1609] 1970, 'The Philippine Islands, Moluccas, Siam, Cambodia, Japan, and China at the Close of the Sixteenth Century', in, B. Franklin, New York, p. 481.
- Morris, B 2003, 'Introduction', in B Morris (ed.), *Religion and Anthropology: A Critical Introduction*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 1-13.
- Mutalib, H 2002, 'The Socio-Economic Dimension in Singapore's Quest for Security and Stability', *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 75, no. 1, pp. 39-56.
- Myers, SM 2000, 'The Impact of Religious Involvement on Migration', *Social Forces*, vol. 79, no. 2, pp. 755-83.
- Nagy, S 1998, '"This Time I Think I'll Try a Filipina": Global and Local Influences on Relations Between Foreign Household Workers and Their Employers in Doha, Qatar', *City & Society*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 83-101.
- Nakamatsu, T 2005, 'Unpaid Domestic Work: Gender, State Policy and the Labour Market in Japan', in S Huang, BSA Yeoh & NA Rahman (eds), *Asian Women as Transnational Domestic Workers*, Marshall Cavendish Academic, London; New York; Beijing; Bangkok; Kuala Lumpur; Singapore, pp. 364-79.
- Nakonz, J & Shik, AWY 2009, 'And All Your Problems are Gone: Religious Coping Strategies Among Philippine Migrant Workers in Hong Kong', *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 25-38.
- Napolitano, V 1997, 'Becoming a Mujercita: Rituals, Fiestas and Religious Discourses', *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 279-96.
- Nelson, RH 2007, 'The Philippine Economic Mystery', *The Philippine Review of Economics*, vol. 44, no. 1, pp. 1-32.

- Ness, SA 1992, *Body, Movement and Culture: Kinesthetic and Visual Symbolism in a Philippine community*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Pennsylvania.
- Ness, SA 1995, 'When Seeing is Believing: The Changing Role of Visuality in a Philippine Dance', *Anthropological Quarterly*, vol. 68, no. 1, pp. 1-13.
- Neville, GK 1984, 'Learning Culture Through Ritual: The Family Reunion', *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 151-66.
- Neville, W 1966, 'Singapore: Ethnic Diversity and Its Implications', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 56, no. 2, pp. 236-53.
- Ng, J 2003, 'The Sojourner Experience: The Cantonese Goldseekers in New Zealand, 1865-1901', in M Ip (ed), *Unfolding History, Evolving Identity: The Chinese in New Zealand*, Auckland University Press, Auckland, pp. 5-30.
- Nietzsche, FW [1882] 1974, *The Gay Science: with a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs. Translated, with Commentary, by Walter Kaufmann*, Random House, New York.
- Nola, N 1997, 'Ethnic Minority Writing in Multicultural Aotearoa/New Zealand', in A Trlin & P Spoonley (eds), *New Zealand and International Migration: A Digest and Bibliography Number 3*, vol. 3, Department of Sociology, Massey University Palmerston North and Albany, Palmerston North and Albany, pp. 60-74.
- O' Hare, N 2004, 'The Unfriendly Isles', in *New Zealand Listener*, vol. 195, pp. 1-4, August 28 - September 3, 2004, Feature.
- Ogaya, C 2004, 'Filipino Domestic Workers and the Creation of New Subjectivities', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 381-404.
- Ogaya, C 2004, 'Social Discourses on Filipino Women Migrants', *Feminist Review*, no. 77, pp. 180-2.

- Oishi, N 2005, *Women in Motion: Globalization, State Policies, and Labor Migration in Asia*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California.
- Okamura, JY 1983, 'Filipino Hometown Associations in Hawaii', *Ethnology*, vol. 22, no. 4, pp. 341-53.
- Okazaki, S, David, EJ & Abelman, N 2008, 'Colonialism and Psychology of Culture', *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 90-106.
- Ong, A 2001, 'The Pacific Shuttle: Family, Citizenship, and Capital Circuits', in JX Inda & R Rosaldo (eds), *The Anthropology of Globalization: A Reader*, Blackwell Publishers, Massachusetts and Oxford, pp. 172-97.
- Ong, A 1999, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logistics of Transnationality*, Duke University Press, United States of America.
- Ong, A 1987, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia*, State University of New York Press, New York.
- Orsi, RR 2005, *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.
- Orsi, RR 2003, 'Is the Study of Lived Religion Irrelevant to the World We Live in? Special Presidential Plenary Address, Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Salt Lake City, November 2, 2002', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 169-74.
- Orsi, RR 1991, 'The Center out There, in Here, and Everywhere Else: The Nature of Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Saint Jude, 1929-1965', *Journal of Social History*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 213-32.
- Orsi, RR 1989, 'What Did Women Think They Were Doing When They Prayed to Saint Jude?', *U.S. Catholic Historian*, vol. 8, no. 1/2, pp. 67-79.
- Orsi, RR 1985, *The Madonna of 115th Street Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950*, Yale University Press, New Haven.

- Osteria, TS 1994, *Filipino Female Labor Migration to Japan: Economic Causes and Consequences*, De La Salle University Press, Manila, Philippines.
- Ortner, SB 1973, 'On Key Symbols', *American Anthropologist, New Series*, vol. 75, no. 5, pp. 1338-46.
- Overholt, WH 1976, 'Land Reform in the Philippines', *Asian Survey*, vol. 16, no. 5, pp. 427-51.
- Owen, NG (ed.) 2005, *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia*, University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu.
- Ozeki, E 1997, 'Migration Frontier of Filipino Women: Ethnic Relations of Filipina Domestic Helpers with Chinese Employers in Hong Kong', *Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 34, no. 4, pp. 676-95.
- Paerregaard, K 2008, 'In the Footsteps of the Lord of Miracles: The Expatriation of Religious Icons in the Peruvian Diaspora', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 34, no. 7, pp. 1073-89.
- Paerregaard, K 2005, 'Inside the Hispanic Melting Pot: Negotiating National and Multicultural Identities Among Peruvians in the United States', *Latino Studies*, vol. 3, pp. 76-96.
- Paerregaard, K 1997, 'Imagining a Place in the Andes: In the Borderland of Lived, Invented, and Analyzed Culture', in KF Olwig & K Hastrup (eds), *Siting Culture: The shifting anthropological object*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 39-58.
- Pagaduan, MC 2006, 'Leaving Home: Filipino Women Surviving Migration. Poverty', in S Arya & A Roy (eds), *Poverty, Gender and Migration*, vol. 2, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, India, pp. 72-87.
- Palmer, MSR 2008, *The Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand's Law and Constitution*, Victoria University Press, Wellington.
- Panayiotopoulos 2005, 'The Globalisation of Care: Filipina Domestic Workers and Care for the Elderly...', *Capital and Class*, vol. 86, pp. 99-133.



- Papastergiadis, N 1998, *Dialogues in the Diasporas: Essays and Conversations on Cultural Identity*, Rivers Oram Press, London and New York.
- Parmer, JN 1983, 'City of the Lion', *The Wilson Quarterly*, vol. 7, no. 5, pp. 48-65.
- Parreñas, RS 2006, 'Trafficked? Filipino Hostesses in Tokyo's Nightlife', *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism*, no. 18, pp. 145-80.
- Parreñas, R 2005a, *Children of Global Migration: Transnational Families and Gendered Woes*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California.
- Parreñas, RS 2005b, 'Long Distance Intimacy: Class, gender and intergenerational relations between mothers and children in Filipino transnational families', *Global Networks*, vol. 5, no. 4, pp. 317-36.
- Parreñas, RS 2004, 'Gender Inequalities in the New Global Economy', in A Fauve-Chamoux (ed.), *Domestic Service and the Formation of European Identity: Understanding the Globalization of Domestic Work, 16th - 21st Centuries*, Peter Lang, Germany, pp. 369-78.
- Parreñas, RS 2002, 'Human Sacrifices: What Happens When Women Migrate and Leave Families Behind? The Case of the Philippines Raises Some Troubling Questions', *The Women's Review of Books*, vol. XIX, no. 5, pp. 15-6.
- Parreñas, RS 2001a, 'Mothering from a Distance: Emotions, Gender, and Intergenerational Relations in Filipino Transnational Families', *Feminist Studies*, vol. 27, no. 2, pp. 361-90.
- Parreñas, RS 2001b, 'Transgressing the Nation-State: The Partial Citizenship and "Imagined (Global) Community" of Migrant Filipina Domestic Workers', *Signs*, vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 1129-54.
- Parreñas, RS 2000, 'Migrant Filipina Domestic Workers and the International Division of Reproductive Labor', *Gender and Society*, vol. 14, no. 4, pp. 560-80.

- Pennartz, PJJ 1999, 'Home the Experience of Atmosphere', in I Cieraad (ed.), *At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space*, Syracuse University Press, New York, pp. 95-106.
- Pe-pua, R 2003, 'Wife, Mother and Maid: The Triple Role of Filipino Domestic Workers in Spain and Italy', in N Piper & M Roces (eds), *Wife or Workers? Asian Women and Migration*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., United States of America, pp. 157-80.
- Perrin, M, Hagopian, A, Sales, A & Huang, B 2007, 'Nurse Migration and its Implications for Philippine Hospitals', *International Nursing Review* pp. 219-26.
- Pertierra, R 1995, *Philippine Localities and Global Perspectives: Essays on Society and Culture*, Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City, Philippines.
- Pertierra, R 1992a, 'Introduction ', in R Pertierra (ed.), *Remittances and Returnees: The Cultural Economy of Migration in Ilocos*, New Day Publishers, Quezon City, pp. vii-xviii.
- Pertierra, R 1992b, 'Conclusion', in R Pertierra (ed.), *Remittances and Returnees: The Cultural Economy of Migration in Ilocos*, New Day Publishers, Quezon City, pp. 130-54.
- Pertierra, R 1992c, 'The Cultural Economy of Migration', in R Pertierra (ed.), *Remittances and Returnees: The Cultural Economy of Migration in Ilocos*, New Day Publishers, Quezon City, pp. 1-23.
- Pertierra, R 1988, *Religion, Politics, and Rationalilty*, Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City.
- Phan, P 2005, 'Popular Religion, the Liturgy and the Cult of the Dead', *East Asian Pastoral Review*, vol. 42, no. 1-2  
<http://eapi.admu.edu.ph/eapr005/peter%20phan.htm>
- Phuong, PQ 2006, 'The Mother Goddess Religion: Its History, Pantheon, and Practices', in K Fjelstad & NT Hien (eds), *Possessed by the Spirits: Mediumship in Contemporary Vietnamese Communities*, Southeast Asia Program Publications, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, pp. 31-54.

- Pieterse, JN 2003, 'Social Capital and Migration: Beyond Ethnic Economies', *Ethnicities*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 29-58.
- Pigafetta, A [1525] 1969, *Magellan's Voyage: A Narrative Account of the First Navigation*, The Folio Society, London.
- Pigafetta, A [1525] 1962, *Magellan's Voyage Around the World*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston.
- Pigafetta, A [1523] 1874, *First Voyage Around the World by Magellan*, Burt Franklin, Publisher, New York.
- Pingol, A 2010, 'Filipino Women Workers in Saudi: Making Offerings for the Here and Now and Hereafter', *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 11, no. 3-4, pp. 384-409.
- Pingol, AT 2001, *Remaking Masculinities: Identity, Power, and Gender Dynamics in Families with Migrant Wives and Househusbands*, University of the Philippines Center for Women Studies, Quezon City.
- Pingol, A 1992, 'Attractions and Imperatives of Migration', in R Pertierra (ed.), *Remittances and Returnees: The Cultural Economy of Migration in Ilocos*, New Day Publishers, Quezon City, pp. 78-113.
- Piper, N 2005, 'Rights of Foreign Domestic Workers - Emergence of Transnational and Transregional Solidarity?', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, vol. 14, no. 1-2, pp. 97-119.
- Piper, N 2004, 'Rights of Foreign Workers and the Politics of Migration in South-East and East Asia', *International Migration*, vol. 42, no. 5, pp. 71-97.
- Piper, N & Uhlin, A 2002, 'Transnational Advocacy Networks, Female Labor Migration and Trafficking in East and Southeast Asia: A Gendered Analysis of Opportunities and Obstacles', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 171-95.
- Placencia, JD [1589]1973, 'Customs of the Tagalogs', in EH Blair & JA Roberson (eds), *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898*, vol. VII - 1588-1591, Cachos Hermanos, Inc., Mandaluyong, Rizal, Philippines, pp. 173-96.

- Poirine, B 2006, 'Remittances Sent by a Growing Altruistic Diaspora: How Do They Grow Over Time? ', *Asian Pacific Viewpoint*, vol. 47, no. 1, p. 2006.
- Polanyi, K, Arensberg, CM & Pearson, HW (eds.) 1957, *Trade and Market in the Early Empires*, Free Press; Collier-Macmillan Limited, New York; London.
- Polanyi, K & Pearson, HW 1977, 'The Livelihood of Man', in HW Pearson (ed.), *Trade and market in the Early Empires: Economies in History and Theory*, Academic Press, New York; San Francisco; London.
- Porio, E 2007, 'Global Householding, Gender, and Filipino Migration: A Preliminary Review', *Philippine Studies*, vol. 55, no. 2, pp. 211-42.
- Portes, A 2000, 'The Two Meanings of Social Capital', *Sociological Forum*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 1-12.
- Portes, A 1998, 'Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology', *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 24, pp. 1-24.
- Portes, A 1997, 'Immigration Theory for a New Century: Some Problems and Opportunities', *International Migration Review*, vol. 31, no. 4, pp. 799-825.
- Portes, A & Sensenbrenner, J 1993, 'Embeddedness and Immigration: Notes on the Social Determinants of Economic Action', *The American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 98, no. 6, pp. 1320-50.
- Poulsen, M, Johnston, R & Forrest, J 2002, 'Plural Cities and Ethnic Enclaves: Introducing a Measurement Procedure for Comparative Study', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 26, no. 2.
- Pratt, G 2003/4, *Between Homes: Displacement and Belonging for Second-Generation Filipino-Canadian Youths*, Filipino-Canadian Youth Alliance, Vancouver, Canada.
- Pratt, G 1999, 'From Registered Nurse to Registered Nanny: Discursive Geographies of Filipina Domestic Workers in Vancouver, B.C.', *Economic Geography*, vol. 75, no. 3, pp. 215-36.

- Prickett, N 2002, 'The Future of New Zealand War Sites and Landscapes', in *National Historic Heritage Workshop*. National Historic Heritage, Wellington, New Zealand, pp. 1-12.
- Putnam, T 1999, '"Postmodern" Home Life', in I Cieraad (ed.), *At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space*, Syracuse University Press, New York, pp. 144-52.
- Quah, JST 2001, 'Singapore: Meritocratic City-State', in J Funston (ed.), *Government and Politics in Southeast Asia*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore.
- Quito, ES 1994, 'The Ambivalence of Filipino Traits and Values', in MBJ Dy (ed.), *Values in Philippine Culture and Education*, vol. 7, Office of Research and Publications and The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, Washington, D. C., pp. 57-61.
- Rafael, VL 2001, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule*, Duke University Press, Durham and London.
- Rafael, VL 1990, 'Nationalism, Imagery, and the Filipino Intelligentsia in the Nineteenth Century', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 591-611.
- Rafael, VL 1987, 'Confession, Conversion and Reciprocity in Early Tagalog Society', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 29, no. 2, pp. 320-39.
- Ramos, FV 2006, 'One Hundred Years of the Filipino Diaspora', *Manila Bulletin*, 1 October 2006
- Ramos, GEM 2001, *The Phenomenon of Filipina Mail-Order-Brides in New Zealand* Auckland University, Auckland.
- Rappaport, RA 1999, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K.
- Rapport, N & Dawson, A 1998, 'The Topic and the Book', in N Rapport & A Dawson (eds), *Migrants of Identity Perceptions of Home in a World of Movement*, BERG, Oxford; New York.

- Ratha, D, Mohapatra, S & Silwal, A 2011, *The Migration and Remittances Fact Book*, Migration and Remittances Unit, World Bank, Washington, D.C.
- Ratha, D & Xu, Z 2009, *Migration and Remittances: Top 10*, Migration and Remittances Team, Development Prospects Group, World Bank
- Ray, K 2004, *The Migrant's Table: Meals and Memories in Bengali-American Households*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, PA.
- Regalado, FB & Franco, QB 1973, *History of Panay*, Central Philippine University, Iloilo City, Philippines.
- Reiniche, M-L 1993, 'Popular Hinduism', in Y Bonnefoy (ed.), *Asian Mythologies*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, pp. 68-75.
- Reiss, M 2004, 'Theorizing Diaspora: Perspectives on "Classical" and "Contemporary" Diaspora', *International Migration*, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 41-60.
- Renfrew, C 2001, 'Production and Consumption in a Sacred Economy: The Material Correlates of High Devotional Expression at Chaco Canyon', *American Antiquity*, vol. 66, no. 1, pp. 14-25.
- Rich, JC 1993, *Courtship by Correspondence: New Zealand Husbands and Filipina Brides*, University of Waikato, Waikato.
- Richards, AI [1932] 2004, *Hunger and Work in a Savage Tribe*, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, London and New York.
- Richards, R 2005, 'Warmth Without Depth: New Zealand and the Philippines', in AL Smith (ed.), *Southeast Asia and New Zealand*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies; New Zealand Institute of International Affairs - Victoria University Press, Singapore and Wellington, pp. 286-96.
- Richardson, M 2003, 'Being-in-the-Market Versus Being-in-the-Plaza: Material Culture and the Construction of Social Reality in Spanish America', in SM Low & D Lawrence-Zuñiga (eds), *The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture*, Blackwell Publishing Oxford, pp. 74-91.

- Riester, A 2009, *Impact of the Global Recession on International Labor Migration and Remittances: Implications for Poverty Reduction and Development in Nepal, Philippines, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan* The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development; Asian Development Bank, Munich, Germany and Manila, Philippines.
- Rivera, ÁGQ 2007, 'Migration, Ethnicity, and Interactions between the United States and Hispanic Caribbean Popular Culture', *Latin American Perspectives*, vol. 34, no. 1, pp. 83-93.
- Roberts, M 1997, 'Immigrants and Language in New Zealand', in A Trlin & P Spoonley (eds), *New Zealand and International Migration: A Digest and Bibliography Number 3*, vol. 3, Department of Sociology, Massey University, Palmerston North and Albany, pp. 75-92.
- Robertson, JA 1973, 'Expedition of Ruy Lopey de Villalobos - 1541-46 [Resume of Contemporaneous Documents, 1541-48]', in EH Blair & JA Robertson (eds), *Philippine Islands 1493-1803*, vol. II - 1521-1569, Cachos Hermanos, Inc., Mandaluyong, Rizal, pp. 47-73.
- Robertson, R 1988, 'Western Observers and Eastern Jews: Kafka, Buber, Franzos', *The Modern Language Review*, vol. 83, no. 1, pp. 87-105.
- Robinson, K 1996, 'Of Mail-Order-Brides and 'Boys' Own Tales: Representations of Asian-Australian Marriages', *Feminist Review*, no. 52, pp. 53-68.
- Roces, M 2003, 'Sisterhood Is Local: Filipino Women in Mount Isa', in N Piper & M Roces (eds), *Wife or Workers? Asian Women and Migration*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., United States of America, pp. 73-100.
- Rockell, K 2009, 'Fiesta', *Affirming Cultural Identity in a Changing Society: A Study of Filipino Music in Christchurch, 2008*. University of Canterbury, Christchurch.
- Rodell, PA 2001, *Culture and Customs of the Philippines*, Greenwood Press, London.

- Rodman, M 2003, 'Empowering Place: Multilocality and Multivocality', in SM Low & D Lawrence-Zuñiga (eds), *The Anthropology of Space and Place*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, pp. 187-203.
- Rodriguez, ER & Tiongson, ER 2001, 'Temporary Migration Overseas and Household Labor Supply: Evidence from Urban Philippines', *International Migration Review*, vol. 35, no. 3, p. 709-25.
- Rodriguez, R 2005, *Domestic Insecurities: Female Migration from the Philippines, Development and National Subject Status*, University California, Berkeley.
- Roland, A 1967, *The Philippines*, The Macmillan Company, New York and London.
- Rolfe, J 2005, 'Coming To Terms With the Regional Identity', in AL Smith (ed.), *Southeast Asia and New Zealand*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies; New Zealand Institute of International Affairs - Victoria University Press, Singapore and Wellington, pp. 32-56.
- Rosaldo, R 1989, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*, Beacon Press, Boston.
- Roscoe, J 1999, *Documentary in New Zealand: An Immigrant Nation*, Dunmore Press Limited, Palmerston North, New Zealand.
- Rose, G 1995, 'Place and identity: A Sense of Place', in D Massey & P Jess (eds), *A Place in the World? Places, Cultures and Globalization*, Oxford University Press; The Open University, Oxford; New York, pp. 87-118.
- Roudometof, V 2005, 'Transnationalism, Cosmopolitanism and Glocalization', *Current Sociology*, no. 53, pp. 113-35.
- Safran, W 2004, 'Deconstructing and comparing diasporas', in KTaCA Waltraud Kokot (ed.), *Diaspora, Identity and Religion: New Directions in Theory and Research*, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, London and New York, pp. 9-29.
- Safran, W 1991, 'Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return', *Diaspora*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 83-99.



- Sakata, HL 1997, *Ethnofoor*, vol. 10, no. 1/2, pp. 165-73.
- Sallnow, MJ 1987, *Pilgrims of the Andes: Regional Cults in Cusco*, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington D.C.; London.
- Sallnow, MJ 1981, 'Communitas Reconsidered: The Sociology of Andean Pilgrimage', *Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 163-82.
- San Juan Jr., E 2001, 'Interrogating Transmigrancy, Remapping Diaspora: The Globalization of Laboring Filipinos/as', *Discourse*, vol. 23, no. 3, pp. 52-74.
- San Juan Jr., E 2000, 'Trajectories of a Filipino Diaspora', *Ethnic Studies Report*, vol. XVIII, no. 2, pp. 229-38.
- Saroca, C 2006, 'Filipino Women, Migration and Violence in Australia: Lived Reality and Media Image', *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies* vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 75-110.
- Sassen, S 2004, 'Global Cities and Diasporic Networks', in H Anheier, M Kaldor & M Glasius (eds), *Global Civil Society 2002*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 217-38.
- Satake, M 2004, 'Filipina-Japanese Intermarriages: A Pathway to New Gender and Cross-Cultural Relations', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, vol. 13, no. 4, pp. 445-73.
- Scharrenberg, P 1929, 'The Philippine Problem: Attitude of American Labor Toward Filipino Immigration and Philippine Independence', *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 49-54.
- Scholte, JA 1996, 'The Geography of Collective Identities in a Globalizing World', *Review of International Political Economy*, vol. 3, no. 4, pp. 565-607.
- Schulze, PA 2004, 'Filipino Mothers' Beliefs About Parenting: A Question of Independence', *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 391-5.

- Scott, JC 1990, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, Yale University Press, New Haven.
- Scott, WH 1984, *Prehispanic Source Materials for the Study of Philippine History*, New Day Publishers, Quezon City, Philippines.
- Scott, WH 1994, *Barangay: Sixteenth Century Philippine Culture and Society*, Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City, Philippines.
- Sealey-Ruiz, Y 2009, "'Tasting Memories'", *Food, Culture & Society*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 131-3.
- Selwyn, T 1995, 'Landscapes of Liberation and Imprisonment: Towards an Anthropology of Israeli Landscape', in E Hirsch & M O'Hanlon (eds), *The Anthropology of Landscape*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, pp. 114-34.
- Semyonov, M & Gorodzeisky, A 2005, 'Labor Migration, Remittances and Household Income: A comparison between Filipino and Filipina Overseas Workers', *The International Migration Review*, vol. 39, no. 1
- Shah, NM, Makhdoom A. Shah, Chowdhury, RI & Menon, I 2002, 'Foreign Domestic Workers in Kuwait: Who Employs How Many', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 247-69.
- Shepperson, G 1966, 'The African Abroad or the African Diaspora', *African Forum: A Quarterly Journal of Contemporary Affairs*, no. 2, pp. 76-93.
- Shouse, E 2005, 'Feeling, Emotion, Affect', in *M/C Journal*, vol. 8, Retrieved 25 Nov. 2009, from <<http://journal.media-culture.org.au/0512/03-shouse.php>>.
- Shuval, JT 2003, 'The Dynamics of Diaspora: Theoretical Implications of ambiguous concepts', in R Munz & R Ohliger (eds.), *Diasporas and Ethnic Migrants; Germany, Israel and Russia in Comparative Perspective*, Frank Cass, London.
- Shuval, JT 2007, 'Diaspora Migration: Definitional Ambiguities and a Theoretical Paradigm', in AK Sahoo (ed.), *Sociology of Diaspora: A*

*Reader*, vol. 1, Rawat Publications, Jaipur; New Delhi; Bangalore; Mumbai; Hyderabad; Guwahati, pp. 28-42.

Sidanius, J, Levin, S, Laar, CV & Sinclair, S 2004, 'Ethnic Enclaves and the Dynamics of Social Identity on the College Campus: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 87, no. 1, pp. 96-110.

Sidel, JT 1997, 'The Philippine Politics in Town, District, and Province: Bossism in Cavite and Cebu', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 56, no. 4, pp. 947-66.

Sills, SJ 2007, 'Philippine Labour Migration to Taiwan: Social, Political, Demographic and Economic Dimensions', *Migration Letters*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 1-14.

Silva, J 2006, *Engaging Diaspora Communities in Development: An Investigation of Filipino Hometown Associations in Canada*, University of Toronto, Canada.

Simons, LA 2001, *Marriage, Migration, and Markets: International Matchmaking and International Feminism*, University of Denver, Denver.

Sinha, V 2010, 'In Conversation with Prof. Aihwa Ong', in *International Sociological Association e-bulletin ISA Newsletter*, pp. 90-103.

Sinnreich, HJ 2007, 'Baluty Market: A Study of a Food Space', *Food, Culture & Society*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 74-84.

Skeldon, R 2008, 'Of Skilled Migration, Brain Drains and Policy Responses', *International Migration*, vol. 47, no. 4, pp. 3-29.

Smith, AL 2005, 'Introduction: The Emergence of New Zealand's Relationship with Southeast Asia', in AL Smith (ed.), *Southeast Asia and New Zealand*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies; New Zealand Institute of International Affairs - Victoria University Press, Singapore and Wellington, pp. 1-6.

Smith, CJ 1995, 'Asian New York: The Geography and Politics of Diversity', *The International Migration Review*, vol. 29, no. 1, p. 59.

- Smith, PC 1976, 'The Social Demography of Filipino Migrations Abroad', *International Migration Review*, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 307-53.
- Smith, N & Low, S 2006, 'Introduction: The Imperative of Public Space', in S Low & N Smith (eds), *The Politics of Public Space*, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, New York; London, pp. 1-16.
- Smith-Shank, DL 2002, 'Community Celebrations as Ritual Signifiers', *Visual Arts Research* vol. 28, no. 2(56), pp. 57-63.
- Soja, EM 1996, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*, Blackwell Publishers, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Soja, EM 1989, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, Verso, London; New York.
- Songco, M 2009, *International Labor Migration and Remittances in the Philippines*, Asian Development Bank, Manila, Philippines.
- Sørensen, BR 1997, 'The Experience of Displacement: Reconstructing Places and Identities in Sri Lanka', in KF Olwig & K Hastrup (eds), *Siting Culture: The shifting anthropological object*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 142-64.
- Spencer, P 2003, 'Dance in Ancient Egypt', *Near Eastern Archaeology*, vol. 66, no. 3, pp. 111-21.
- Spradley, J 1980, *Participant Observation* Wadsworth Thomson Learning, Australia; Canada; Mexico; Singapore; Spain; United Kingdom; United States.
- Stark, R & Finke, R 2000, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*, University of California Press, Berkeley; Los Angeles; London.
- Stasiulis, D & Bakan, A 1997, 'Regulation and Resistance: Strategies of Migrant Domestic Workers in Canada and Internationally', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 31-57.

- Straussfogel, D 1997, 'World-Systems Theory: Toward a Heuristic and Pedagogic Conceptual Tool', *Economic Geography*, vol. 73, no. 1, pp. 118-30.
- Stringer, C & Andrews, P 2005, *The Complete World of Human Evolution* Thames & Hudson, London; New York.
- Stokes, E 1992, 'The Treaty of Waitangi and the Waitangi Tribunal: Maori Claims in New Zealand', *Applied Geography*, no. 12, pp. 176-91.
- Stone, L & Lurquin, PF 2007, *Genes, Culture, and Human Evolution: A Synthesis*, 1 edition, 2007, Blackwell Publishing, United Kingdom.
- Sutton, DE 2001, *Remembrance of Repasts: An Anthropology of Food and Memory*, Berg, Oxford; New York.
- Suzuki, N 2007, 'Marrying a Marilyn of the Tropics: Manhood and Nationhood in Filipina-Japanese Marriages ', *Anthropological Quarterly*, vol. 80, no. 2, pp. 427-54.
- Suzuki, N 2005, 'Women Imagined, Women Imaging: Re/presentations of Filipinas in Japan since the 1980s', in FVJ Aguilar (ed.), *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 23, Philippine Migration Research Network and Philippine Social Science Council, Quezon City, pp. 431-44.
- Suzuki, N 2000, 'Between Two Shores: Transnational Projects and Filipina Wives In/From Japan', *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 431-44.
- Swedberg, R 1991, 'Major Traditions of Economic Sociology', *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 17, pp. 251-76.
- Swee-Hock, S 2007, *The Population of Malaysia*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore.
- Tacoli, C 1999, 'International Migration and the Restructuring of Gender Assymetries: Continuity and Change among Filipino Labor Migrants in Rome', *International Labor Migration Review*, vol. Vol. 33, no. no. 3, pp. pp. 658-82.

- Tadiar, N 2004, *Fantasy-Production: Sexual Economies and Other Philippine Consequences for the New World Order*, Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City.
- Taylor, WB 1987, 'The Virgin of Guadalupe in New Spain: An Inquiry into the Social History of Marian Devotion', *American Ethnologist*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 9-33.
- Temple, P 2008, *Presenting New Zealand: An Illustrated History*, New Holland Publishers (NZ) Ltd., Auckland; Sydney; London; Cape Town.
- Terada, T 2010, 'Migrants and the Catholic Church in Japan: Filipino Communities in the Tokyo Archdiocese', in *Religions, Regionalism, and Globalization in Asia*, Ateneo Center for Asian Studies, Quezon City, pp. 43-54.
- Thien, D 2003, *Vietnamese Supernaturalism: Views from the Southern Region*, RoutledgeCurzon Taylor and Francis Group, London and New York.
- Thrift, N 2008, *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect*, Routledge, London.
- Tibe-Bonifacio, GLA 2005, 'Filipino Women in Australia: Practising Citizenship at Work', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, vol. 14, no. 3, pp. 293-326.
- Tilley, C 1994, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments*, Berg, Oxford/Providence, USA.
- Tolentino, RB 1996, 'Bodies, Letters, Catalogs: Filipinas in Transnational Space', *Social Text*, no. 48, pp. 49-76.
- Tölölyan, K 2007, 'The Contemporary Discourse on Diaspora Studies', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, vol. 27, no. 3, pp. 637-55.
- Tondo, JSF 2010, 'Popular Religiosity and the Transnational Journey: Inscribing Filipino Identity in the Santo Nino Fiesta in New Zealand', *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 219-44.

- Toren, C 2006, 'The Effectiveness of Ritual', in F Cannell (ed.), *The Anthropology of Christianity*, Duke University Press, Durham & London, pp. 185-210.
- Transylvanus, M [1523]1973, 'DE MOLDVCCIS INSULIS', in EH Blair & JA Robertson (eds), *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898*, vol. 1-3, Cachos Hermanos, Inc., Mandaluyong, Rizal, Philippines, pp. 305-37.
- Trlin, AD 1986, 'New Zealand's Immigration Policy in the early 1980's', in AD Trlin & P Spoonley (eds), *New Zealand and International Migration: A Digest Bibliography, Number 1*, vol. 1, Massey University Printery for the Department of Sociology, Palmerston North, New Zealand, p. 162.
- Tsagarousianou, R 2004, 'Rethinking the Concept of Diaspora: Mobility, Connectivity and Communication in a Globalised World', *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 52-66.
- Tseng, V & Fuligni, AJ 2000, 'Parent-Adolescent Language Use and Relationships Among Immigrant Families with East Asian, Filipino, and Latin American Backgrounds', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, vol. 62, no. 1, pp. 465-76.
- Tuan, YF 1977, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd., London.
- Tuan, YF 1975, 'Place: An Experiential Perspective', *Geographical Review*, vol. 65, no. 2, pp. 151-65.
- Tuomainen, HM 2009, 'Ethnic Identity, (Post) Colonialism and Foodways: Ghanaians in London', *Food, Culture & Society*, vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 526-54.
- Turner, TS 1977, 'Transformation, Hierarchy and Transcendence: A Reformulation of Van Gennep's Model of the Structure of Rites de Passage', in SF Moore & BG Myerhoff (eds), *Secular Ritual*, Van Gorcum & Comp., Amsterdam, pp. 53-70.
- Turner, VW 1986, 'The Anthropology of Performance', in V Turner (ed.), *The Anthropology of Performance*, PAJ Publications (A Division of Performing Arts Journal Inc.), New York, pp. 72-98.

- Turner, VW 1977a, 'Process, System, and Symbol: A New Anthropological Synthesis', *Daedalus*, vol. 106, no. 3, pp. 61-80.
- Turner, VW 1977b, 'Variations on a Theme of Liminality', in SF Moore & BG Myerhoff (eds), *Secular Ritual*, Van Gorcum & Comp., Amsterdam, pp. 36-52.
- Turner, V 1975, 'Symbolic Studies', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 4, pp. 145-61.
- Turner, VW 1974, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London.
- Turner, VW 1973, 'The Center Out There: Pilgrim's Goal', *History of Religions*, vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 191-230.
- Turner, VW 1969, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.
- Turner, VW 1967, *The Forest of Symbols*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London.
- Turner, VW 1962, 'Themes in the Symbolism of Ndembu Hunting Ritual', *Anthropological Quarterly*, vol. 35, no. 2, pp. 37-57.
- Tweed, TA 1997, *Our Lady of the Exile: Diasporic Religion at a Cuban Catholic Shrine in Miami*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Tyner, JA 2004, *Made in the Philippines: Gendered Discourses and the Making of Migrants*, RoutledgeCurzon London and New York.
- Tyner, JA 2002, 'The Globalization of Transnational Labor Migration and the Filipino Family: A Narrative', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 95-116.
- Tyner, JA 1999, 'The Global Context of Gendered Labor Migration from the Philippines to the United States', *The American Behavioral Scientist*, vol. 42, no. 4, pp. 671-89.
- Tyner, JA 2000, 'Migrant Labour and the Politics of Scale: Gendering the Philippine state', *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, vol. 41, no. 2, pp. 131-54.



- Tyner, JA & Donaldson, D 1999, 'The Geography of Philippine international labour migration', *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, vol. 40, no. 3, pp. 217-34.
- Tyner, JA & Kuhlke, O 2000, 'Pan-national identities: representations of the Philippine diaspora on the world wide web ', *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, vol. 41, no. 3, pp. 231-52.
- Ueno, K 2009, 'Strategies of Resistance among Filipina and Indonesian Domestic Workers in Singapore', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, vol. 18, no. 4, pp. 497-517.
- Underhill, PA, Passarino, G, Lin, AA, Marzuki, S, Oefner, PO, Cavalli-Sforza, LL & Chambers, GK 2001, 'Maori Origins, Y-Chromosome Haplotypes and Implications for Human History in the Pacific', *Human Mutation*, no. 17, pp. 271-80.
- Vallianatos, H & Raine, K 2008, 'Consuming Food and Constructing Identities Among Arabic and South Asian Immigrant Women ', *Food, Culture and Society: An International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 355-73.
- van der Kroef, JM 1966-67, 'Patterns of Cultural Conflict in Philippine Life', *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 39, no. 3/4, pp. 326-38.
- Van Gennep, A 1960, *The Rites of Passage*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Van der Veer, P 1992, 'Playing or Praying: A Sufi Saint's Day in Surat', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 51, no. 3, pp. 545-64.
- Vasil, R 2000, *Governing Singapore: Democracy and National Development*, Allen & Unwin, Singapore.
- Vasquez, ND 1992, *Economic and Social Impact of Labor Migration*, Scalabrini Migration Center, Quezon City, Philippines.
- Velasco, P 2002, 'Filipino Migrant Workers Amidst Globalization', *Canadian Women's Studies* vol. 21/22, no. 4/1, pp. 131-5.
- Verma, V 2002, *Malaysia State and Civil Society in Transition*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, London.

- Vertovec, S 2003, 'Migration and Other Modes of Transnationalism: Towards Conceptual Cross-fertilization', *The International Migration Review*, vol. 37, no. 3, pp. 641-65.
- Vertovec, S 2001a, 'Transnational Challenges to the 'New' Multiculturalism', in *ASA Conference*. University of Oxford, University of Sussex, 30 March - 2 April 2001.
- Vertovec, S 2001b, 'Transnational Social formations: Towards Conceptual Cross-fertilization', in *Transnational Migration: Comparative Perspectives*. University of Oxford, Princeton University, June 30-July 1, 2007.
- Vertovec, S 2000, 'Religion and Diaspora', in *Conference on 'New Landscapes of Religion in the West'*. Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Oxford, School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford, 27-29 September 2000.
- Vertovec, S 1999a, 'Conceiving and Researching Transnationalism', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 447-62.
- Vertovec, S 1999b, 'Three meanings of 'Diaspora', Exemplified Among South Asian Religions', *Diaspora*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 1-37.
- Vogt, EZ & Bricker, VR 1996, 'The Zinacanteco Fiesta of San Sebastian: An Essay in Ethnographic Interpretation', *Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 29/30, pp. 203-22.
- Wahlbeck, Ö 2002, 'The Concept of Diaspora as an Analytical Tool in the Study of Refugee Communities', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 28, no. 2, pp. 221-38.
- Wahlbeck, Ö 1998, 'Transnationalism and Diasporas: The Kurdish Example', in *International Sociological Association XIV World Congress of Sociology*. Institute of Migration, Finland, Montreal, Canada, July 26 - August 1, 1998.
- Walks, RA & Bourne, LS 2006, 'Ghettos in Canada's cities? Racial Segregation, Ethnic Enclaves and Poverty Concentration in Canadian Urban Areas', *Canadian Geographer*, vol. 50, no. 3, pp. 273-97.

- Wallach, B 2005, *Understanding the Cultural Landscape*, The Guilford Press, New York; London.
- Wallerstein, I 1974, 'The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 387-415.
- Walrond, C 2007, *Filipinos*, The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, New Zealand, September 21, 2007.
- Wan, E & Tira, SJ 2008, *The Filipino Experience in Diaspora Missions: A Case Study of Mission Initiatives From the Majority World Churches*, Majority World Churches, Northwest, Portland, Oregon.
- Warner, RS 1998, 'Approaching Religious Diversity: Barriers, Byways, and Beginnings', *Sociology of Religion*, vol. 59, no. 3, pp. 193-215.
- Warner, SR 1998, 'Introduction: Immigration and Religious Communities in the United States', in SR Warner & JG Wittner (eds), *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, pp. 3-34.
- Wellmeier, NJ 1998, 'Santa Eulalia's People in Exile: Maya Religion, Culture, and Identity in Los Angeles', in SR Warner & JG Wittner (eds), *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, pp. 97-122.
- Weber, M 1930, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: translated by Talcott Parsons*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London.
- Werbner, P 2010, 'Religious Identity', in M Wetherell & CT Mohanty (eds), *The Sage Handbook of Identities*, Sage Publications Ltd., United Kingdom, pp. 233-57.
- Werbner, P 2009, 'The Hidden Lion: Tswapong Girls' Puberty Rituals and the Problem of History', *American Ethnologist*, vol. 36, no. 3, pp. 441-58.
- Werbner, P 2007, 'The Place Which is Diaspora: Citizenship, Religion and Gender in the Making of Chaordic Transnationalism ', in AK Sahoo (ed.), *Sociology of Diaspora: A Reader*, vol. 2, Rawat Publications,

Jaipur; New Delhi; Bangalore; Mumbai; Hyderabad; Guwahati, pp. 643-62.

Werbner, P 2005a, 'Chaordic Diasporas', in *Encyclopedia of Diasporas: Immigrant and Refugee Cultures Around the World*, eds. M Ember, CR Ember & I Skoggard. Springer Science+Business Media Inc., Boston, pp. 545-52.

Werbner, P 2005b, 'The Translocation of Culture: 'Community Cohesion' and the Force of Multiculturalism in History', *Sociological Review*, vol. 53, no. 4, pp. 745-68.

Werbner, P 2004, 'Theorizing Complex Diasporas: Purity and Hybridity in the South Asian Public Sphere in Britain', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 30, no. 5, pp. 895-911.

Werbner, P 2003, *Pilgrims of Love: The Anthropology of a Global Sufi Cult*, Hurst & Company, London.

Werbner, P 2002a, *Imagined Diasporas Among Manchester Muslims*, Jame Currey; School of American Research Press, Oxford; Santa Fe.

Werbner, P 2002b, 'The Place Which is Diaspora: Citizenship, Religion and Gender in the Making of Chaordic Transnationalism', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 119-33.

Werbner, P 1990/2002, *The migration process: Capital, gifts, and offerings among British Pakistanis*, Berg, New York.

Werbner, P 2001, 'Metaphors of Spatiality and Networks in the Plural City: A Critique of the Ethnic Enclave Economy Debate', *Sociology*, vol. 35, no. 3, pp. 671-93.

Werbner, P 2000, 'Introduction: The Materiality of Diaspora - Between Aesthetic and "Real" Politics', *Diaspora*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 5-20.

Werbner, P 1999, 'Global Pathways. Working Class Cosmopolitans and the Creation of Transnational Ethnic Worlds', *Social Anthropology*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 17-35.

- Werbner, P 1995, 'Stamping the Earth with the Name of Allah: Zikr and the Sacralizing of Space among British Muslims', *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 309-38.
- Werbner, P 1990, 'Economic Rationality and Hierarchical Gift Economies: Value and Ranking Among British Pakistanis', *Man, New Series*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 266-85.
- White, J 1888, *The Ancient History of the Maori, His Mythology and Traditions, Tai-Nui*, George Didsbury Government Printer, Wellington.
- Wickberg, E 1964, 'The Chinese Mestizo in Philippine History', *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 62-100.
- Wiegele, KL 2005, *Investing In Miracles: El Shaddai and the Transformation of Popular Catholicism in the Philippines*, University of Hawai'i Press, Hawai'i.
- Williams, LA 2007, 'Foodways and Subjectivity in Jhumpa Lahiri's Interpreter of Maladies', *MELUS*, vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 69-79.
- Wilson, KL & Martin, WA 1982, 'Ethnic Enclaves: A Comparison of the Cuban and Black Economies in Miami', *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 88, no. 1, pp. 135-60.
- Wilson, KL & Portes, A 1980, 'Immigrant Enclaves: An Analysis of the Labor Market Experiences of Cubans in Miami', *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 86, no. 2, pp. 295-319.
- Wilson, M 1954, 'Nyakyusa Ritual and Symbolism', *American Anthropologist*, vol. 56, no. 2, Part 1, pp. 228-41.
- Winnicott, DW [1951; 1971] 2011, 'Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena', in L Caldwell & A Joyce (eds), *Reading Winnicott*, Taylor and Francis, Hoboken, pp. 103-25.
- Woelz-Stirling, N, Manderson, L, Kelaher, M & Gordon, S 2000, 'Marital Conflict and Finances Among Filipinas in Australia ', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, no. 24, pp. 791-805.

- Woelz-Stirling, N, Kelaher, M & Manderson, L 1998, 'Power and Politics of Abuse: Rethinking Violence in Filipina-Australian Marriages', *Health Care for Women International*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 791-805.
- Wolf, DL 1997, 'Family Secrets: Transnational Struggles Among Children of Filipino Immigrants', *Sociological Perspectives*, vol. 40, no. 3, pp. 457-82.
- Wolf, E 1982, *Europe and the People Without History*, University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Wolf, ER 1958, 'The Virgin of Guadalupe: A Mexican National Symbol', *The Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 71, no. 279, pp. 34-9.
- Wong, D 1996, 'Foreign Domestic Workers in Singapore', in G Battistella & A Paganoni (eds), *Asian Women in Migration*, Scalabrini Migration Center, Quezon City, Philippines, pp. 87-108.
- Wong, D & Saat, G 2002, *Trafficking of Filipino Women to Malaysia: Examining the Experiences and Perspectives of Victims, Governmental and NGO Experts*, United Nations Global Programme Against Trafficking in Human Beings
- Yamane, D 2000, 'Narrative and Religious Experience', *Sociology of Religion*, vol. 61, no. 2, pp. 171-89.
- Yamba, CB 1995, *Permanent pilgrims: The Role of Pilgrimage in the Lives of West African Muslims in Sudan*, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C.
- Yang, F 1998, 'Tenacious Unity in a Contentious Community: Cultural and Religious Dynamics in a Chinese Christian Church', in SR Warner & JG Wittner (eds), *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, pp. 333-61.
- Yea, S 2008, 'Married to the Military: Filipinas Negotiating Transnational Families', *International Migration*, vol. 46, no. 4, pp. 111-44.
- Yea, S 2005, 'When Push Comes to Shove: Sites of Vulnerability, Personal Transformation, and Trafficked Women's Migration Decisions',

*SOJOURN: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 67-95.

Yelvington, KA 2001, 'The Anthropology of Afro-Latin America and the Caribbean: Diasporic Dimensions', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 30, pp. 227-60.

Yeoh, BSA 2007, 'Singapore: Hungry for Foreign Workers at All Skill Levels', in *Migration Information Source: Fresh Thought, Authoritative Data, Global Reach*. MPI, Singapore

Yeoh, BSA 2005, 'Bifurcated Labour: The Unequal Incorporation Of Transmigrants In Singapore', *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, vol. 97, no. 1, pp. 26-37.

Yeoh, BSA, Graham, E & Boyle, PJ 2002, 'Migrations and Family Relations in the Asia Pacific Region', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, vol. 11, no. 1-11

Yeoh, BSA & Huang, S 2000, '"Home" and "Away": Foreign Domestic Workers and Negotiations of Diasporic Identity in Singapore', *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 413-329.

Yeoh, BSA & Huang, S 1998, 'Negotiating Public Space: Strategies and Styles of Migrant Female Domestic Workers in Singapore', *Urban Studies*, vol. 35, no. 3, pp. 583-602.

Yeoh, BSA, Huang, S & Gonzalez, J 1999, 'Migrant Female Domestic Workers: Debating the Economic, Social and Political Impacts in Singapore', *International Migration Review*, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 114-36.

Yeoh, BSA, Huang, S & Rahman, NA 2005, 'Introduction: Asian Women as Transnational Domestic Workers', in S Huang, BSA Yeoh & NA Rahman (eds), *Asian Women as Transnational Domestic Workers*, Marshall Cavendish Academic, London; New York; Beijing; Bangkok; Kuala Lumpur; Singapore, pp. 1-20.

Yeoh, BSA & Khoo, L-M 1998, 'Home, Work and Community: Skilled International Migration and Expatriate Women in Singapore', *International Migration*, vol. 36, no. 2, pp. 159-86.

- Yi, D-h 1988, 'Role Playing Through Trance Possession in Korean Shamanism', in RWI Guisso & C-s Yu (eds), *Shamanism: The Spirit World of Korea*, Asian Humanities Press, Berkeley, California, pp. 162-78.
- Zaide, GF 1949, *Philippine Political and Cultural History*, Philippine Education Company, Manila.
- Zakaria, F 2002, 'Asian Values', *Foreign Policy*, no. 133, pp. 38-9.
- Zakaria, F & Yew, LK 1994, 'Culture is destiny', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 2, pp. 109-26.
- Zhou, M & Logan, JR 1989, 'Returns of Human Capital in Ethnic Enclaves: New York City's Chinatown', *American Sociological Review*, vol. 54, no. 5, pp. 809-20.
- Zialcita, FN 2005, *Authentic Though Not Exotic: Essays on Filipino Identity*, Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City.
- Zontini, E 2004, 'Immigrant Women in Barcelona: Coping with the Consequences of Transnational Lives', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 30, no. 6, pp. 1113-44.

#### **List of Cited Web/Blogsites:**

##### ***Ati-atihan and Sinulog fiestas / folklore web/blogsites:***

- Ati-atihan festival* [Online]. Available: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ati-Atihan\\_Festival](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ati-Atihan_Festival) [Accessed 23 September 2011].
- Ati-atihan folklore (a)* [Online]. Bibingka. Available: <http://www.bibingka.com/phg/ati2han/default.htm> [Accessed 20 August 2010].
- Ati-atihan folklore (b)* [Online]. Philippine Country Guide. Available: [http://www.philippinecountry.com/philippine\\_festivals/ati-atihan\\_festival.html](http://www.philippinecountry.com/philippine_festivals/ati-atihan_festival.html) [Accessed 20 August 2010].
- Ati-atihan folklore (c)* [Online]. Wikipedia. Available: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ati-Atihan\\_Festival](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ati-Atihan_Festival) [Accessed 20 August 2010].



*Ati-atihan folklore (d)* [Online]. Sarisari etc... Available:  
<http://www.mts.net/~pmorrow/marfore.htm> [Accessed 20 August 2010].

*Ati-atihan participant image* [Online]. The Utrecht Faculty of Education.  
 Available: <http://www.philippines.hvu.nl/culture3.htm> [Accessed 23 September 2011].

*Ati-atihan procession image* [Online]. FestiVals. Available:  
<http://festivalinfo-jerome.blogspot.co.nz/2010/07/ati-atihan-fest-info.html> [Accessed 23 September 2011].

*The Maragtas Legend* [Online]. Paul Morrow. Available:  
[http://www.mts.net/~pmorrow/marag\\_e.htm](http://www.mts.net/~pmorrow/marag_e.htm) [Accessed 20 August 2010].

*Sinulog participant 1 image* [Online]. Filipina soul Available:  
<http://www.filipinasoul.com/2008/01/sinulog-festival-2008/>  
 [Accessed 23 September 2011].

*Sinulog participant 2 image* [Online]. See you latte. Available:  
<http://www.seeyoulatte.com.ph/blog/cebu/witness-the-grandest-event-in-cebu-the-sinulog-festival/> [Accessed 23 September 2011].

### **Filipinos in Singapore web/blogsites:**

*Expat Blog: Filipinos in Singapore* [Online]. Expat Blog. Available:  
<http://www.expat-blog.com/en/nationalities/filipino/in/asia/singapore/>  
 [Accessed 23 September 2011].

*The F (Finely Filipino) Magazine* [Online]. The F (Finely Filipino) Magazine. Available: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-F-Finely-Filipino-Magazine/166007946747550> [Accessed 23 September 2011].

*Filipinos in Singapore* [Online]. Filipinos in Singapore. Available:  
<https://www.facebook.com/FilipinosInSG> [Accessed 23 September 2011].

*FilipinoSG Free Classifieds* [Online]. FilipinoSG. Available:  
<http://filipinosg.com/> [Accessed 23 September 2011].

*Kababayan: Faces of Filipinas in Singapore* [Online]. Kababayan.  
Available: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Kababayan-Faces-of-Filipinas-in-Singapore/105925816106316> [Accessed 23 September 2011].

*Pinoy Village Magazine (Singapore)* [Online]. Pinoy Village Magazine.  
Available: <http://www.freewebs.com/pvmagazine/> [Accessed 23 September 2011].

### **Cited images / maps web/blogsites:**

*Black Nazarene image* [Online]. Wikipedia. Available:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black\\_Nazarene](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Nazarene) [Accessed 29 August 2011].

*Belen image* [Online]. Skyscraper Available:  
<http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?p=29451618>  
[Accessed 10 November 2010].

*Central Visayas Map* [Online]. Adventure Philippines. Available:  
<http://adventurephilippines.tripod.com/id29.html> [Accessed 26 November 2011].

*Flor Contemplacion image* [Online]. L.A. Zamboanga Times. Available:  
<http://www.lazamboangatimes.com/IPIL1995.html> [Accessed 23 September 2011].

*Malakas at Maganda image* [Online]. Wikipedia. Available:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Malakas\\_and\\_Maganda\\_Emerging\\_from\\_Bamboo\\_BambooMan.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Malakas_and_Maganda_Emerging_from_Bamboo_BambooMan.jpg) [Accessed 30 November 2011].

*Mother of Perpetual Help image* [Online]. Wikipedia. Available:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our\\_Lady\\_of\\_Perpetual\\_Help](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our_Lady_of_Perpetual_Help) [Accessed 29 August 2011].

*New Zealand Map* [Online]. Destination 360. Available:  
<http://www.destination360.com/australia-south-pacific/new-zealand/map> [Accessed 26 November 2011].

*Our Lady of Fatima image* [Online]. Available: <http://connect.in.com/our-lady-of-fatima/photos-1-1-1-7587c897f54b78022d66dff2ee4a641.html> [Accessed 29 August 2011].

*Our Lady of Lourdes image* [Online]. Photobucket Available: <http://photobucket.com/images/Our+Lady+of+Lourdes/> [Accessed 29 August 2011].

*Panay Island Map* [Online]. Geocities. Available: [http://www.oocities.org/thetropics/cove/2342/island\\_of\\_panay.htm](http://www.oocities.org/thetropics/cove/2342/island_of_panay.htm) [Accessed 26 November 2011].

*Philippines Map* [Online]. Wikipedia. Available: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ph\\_physical\\_map.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ph_physical_map.png) [Accessed 26 November 2011].

*Saint Jude Thaddeus image* [Online]. Chantcd.com. Available: [https://www.chantcd.com/index.php/page/shop:flypage/product\\_id/551/](https://www.chantcd.com/index.php/page/shop:flypage/product_id/551/) [Accessed 29 August 2011].

*Santo Niño de Cebu image* [Online]. Paulus blogsite. Available: <http://paulus21op.multiply.com/journal/item/117/117> [Accessed 29 August 2011].

*Singapore map* [Online]. Turkey Travel Guide. Available: [http://www.turkey-visit.com/map/singapore/singapore/singapore\\_map\\_malaysia.jpg](http://www.turkey-visit.com/map/singapore/singapore/singapore_map_malaysia.jpg) [Accessed 26 May 2012].

#### **Other cited web/blogsites:**

*Ancient Creation Myth: Malakas and Maganda* [Online]. BakitWhy Community. Available: <http://www.bakitwhy.com/articles/ancient-philippine-creation-myth-malakas-and-maganda> [Accessed 15 November 2011].

*Catholic Population Statistics by Country* [Online]. Available: <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/sc1.html> [Accessed 12 November 2011].

*Filipino Artists in New Zealand* [Online]. Available:

<http://filipinoartistsnewzealand.wordpress.com/category/filipino-artists-in-new-zealand/> [Accessed 20 May 2010].

*FILODEP ArchDiocese information hyperlink* [Online]. Catholic

Archdiocese of Singapore. Available:

[http://www.veritas.org.sg/catholic\\_directory\\_group\\_detail.php?GroupID=337&GroupType=Services](http://www.veritas.org.sg/catholic_directory_group_detail.php?GroupID=337&GroupType=Services) [Accessed 1 September 2008].

*Philippine Overseas Employment Administration Statistical Reports* [Online].

Available: <http://www.poea.gov.ph/stats/statistics.html> [Accessed 2007-2013].

*Recollection* [Online]. Available:

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12676b.htm> [Accessed 20 November 2010].

*Santacruzian Folklore and Procession Characters* [Online].

Wikipilipinas.org. Available:

<http://en.wikipilipinas.org/index.php?title=Santacruzian> [Accessed 19 December 2009].

*World Data Base of Happiness* [Online]. Available:

[http://worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/hap\\_nat/nat\\_fp.php?mode=1](http://worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/hap_nat/nat_fp.php?mode=1) [Accessed 28 November 2011].

## Appendices

### Appendix A: *Santacruz*an Procession Characters

- ✚ **Methuselah** is the grandfather of Noah cited in the book of Genesis (Gen 5:25) of the Old Testament and Hebrew Scriptures. In the procession, he is portrayed as a bearded old man holding grains of sand in a pan symbolically representing the transience of human life, that all things return to ashes and sand.
- ✚ **Reina Banderada** is symbolically represented by a young woman in a long red gown, carrying a triangular yellow flag to denote the coming of Christianity.
- ✚ **Aetas** – Soot covered participants represent the aetas, to symbolise the indigenous natives of the islands deemed pagans by the Catholic missionaries, and the state of the country before the coming of Christianity.
- ✚ **Reina Mora** is represented by a young woman attired in indigenous Muslim dress to represent Islam, the dominant religion in the islands before Christianity.
- ✚ **Reina Fe** is represented by a young woman carrying a cross to symbolise the virtue of faith.
- ✚ **Reina Esperanza** is represented by a young woman carrying an anchor to symbolise the virtue of hope. In life
- ✚ **Reina Caridad** is represented by a young woman carrying a red heart to symbolise the virtue of charity and carries a red heart.
- ✚ **Reina Abogada** is represented by a young woman wearing a black graduation cap and gown carrying a big book. She is deemed to be the defender of the poor and the oppressed..
- ✚ **Reina Sentenciada** is represented by a woman bounded by a rope and accompanied by two Roman soldiers representing the innocents who have been unjustly convicted.
- ✚ **Reina Justicia** is represented by a blindfolded woman carrying a sword and weighing scale symbolising justice.
- ✚ **Reina Judith** is Judith of Bethulia, a Hebrew heroine who assassinated by beheading Holofernes, the most powerful general of Nebuchadnezzar, King of the Assyrians. In the procession, she is represented by a woman carrying the head of a man in one hand and a sword in the other.
- ✚ **Reina Sheba** is referred to in the First Book of Kings (1Kings 10:1-13) and in the gospel of Luke as the Queen who travelled a long distance to listen to the wisdom of Solomon (Luke 11:31). She symbolises power and riches by carrying a jewelry box.

- ✚ **Reina Esther** is another scriptural character saved her countrymen from death and destruction (see Book of Esther) and portrayed by a woman carrying a scepter.
- ✚ **Samaritana** is one of the prominent women characters of John's gospel (John 4:1-42) The woman who Christ spoke to at the well. She carries a jug on her shoulder.
- ✚ **Veronica** is traditionally recognised in the Catholic Church as the woman who wiped Christ's face on his way to crucifixion, portrayed by a woman carrying a white cloth with the imprinted with the bloodied face of Jesus in three segments.
- ✚ **The Tres Marias:**
  - **Mary of Magdala** is Mary Magdalene represented by a young woman carrying a bottle of perfume.
  - **Mary, Mother of Christ** is represented by a woman carrying a handkerchief, apparently to wipe tears of her sorrow.
  - **Mary, Mother of James** is represented by a woman carrying a bottle of oil.
- ✚ **Marian** or the *Ave Marias* is composed of eight young women or girls wearing long white dresses with wings, each carrying one of the letters that spell out A-V-E--M-A-R-I-A, representing the many titles of Virgin Mary

- ❖ ***Divina Pastora*** (Divine Shepherdess) - Carries a shepherd's staff.
- ❖ ***Reina de las Estrellas*** (Queen of Stars) - Carries a wand with a star.
- ❖ ***Rosa Mystica*** (Mystical Rose) - Carries a bouquet of roses.
- ❖ ***Reina Paz*** (Queen of Peace) - Carries the symbol of peace.
- ❖ ***Reina de las Propetas*** (Queen of Prophets) - Carries a hourglass.
- ❖ ***Reina del Cielo*** (Queen of Heaven) - Carries a flower and is flanked by two angels.
- ❖ ***Reina de las Virgines*** (Queen of Virgins) - Carries a rosary and is flanked by two angels.
- ❖ ***Reina de las Flores*** (Queen of Flowers) - Carries a bouquet of flowers.
- ❖ ***Reina Elena*** (Queen Helena) - The discoverer of the true Cross, symbolized by the small cross she carries.

## Appendix B: Original texts of cited migrant narratives

### Chapter 4

4.1 Mercy: *Pag talagang oras mo na, oras mo na. Yung isang nurse na kasama sa grupo, nagkasakit, kaya absent sa klase nung araw na yun. Nag-pa excuse sya na di makakapasok. Tingnan mo yan, kung sino pa yung maysakit, sya ang nakalibre, at yung mga malulusog, sila yung mga namatay. Kaya nga kahit ano pa ang gawin mo, kung talagang oras mo na, oras mo na.*

4.2 Crystal: *Wag mo na lang pulutin, Jo. Merong mga humihingi ng pagkain.... Yung mga di natin nakikita. Gusto rin nilang makikain sa atin... nakakalimutan na kasi sila. Dapat lang na bigyan natin sila...*

4.3 Crystal: *[Ba]Hala ka, baka, magalit... me kasamang malas yan...*

### Chapter 5

5.1 Julie: For example we have a party here, after we finish eating and there are some leftovers, I'll say, "you can take some, *kaysa masayang. Sa mga puti na nandyan, rude yun. Rude yun sa kanila na kumain ka na, magdadala ka pa. (laughs) Nasanay na sila, Pilipino custom, talagang may baon. (laughs)*

5.2 Annie: *Yun ang pinaka-family mo dito, yung simbahan, yung choir. Yan ang parang pamilya mo dito. Kung ano mang grupo ang sinalihan mo, palagay ko yun ang second family mo. Kasi pumunta ka rito, wala kang pamilya eh.*

5.3 Familiar comment: *Ah, kasama ka sa choir ni...*

5.4 Christopher: *Ang Pinoy, maaasahan mo anytime. Sinong magtutulong-tulong? Ang Kiwi<sup>298</sup>, magtutulong-tulong ba ang mga yan? They would rather go to the police. Pero ang Pinoy they will go an extra mile para tulungan ang kapwa Pinoy.*

5.5 Fannie: *Kasi, tayong, mga Pilipino, maano yung sense of humor, di ba? Tapos,..., positive ang outlook natin sa buhay. I mean, hindi ko naman sinasabi na hindi positive ang outlook nila.*

---

<sup>298</sup> Kiwi to most Filipinos refers to White New Zealanders. Other groups are mentioned by their specific cultural origins, like Maori.

5.6 John: *Mahirap makipagbiro sa kanila.... Minsan makikita mo... teka, joke yung sinabi ko, ba't di sila natawa? Seryoso yan... Kaya ginagawa ko na lang, hindi na ako nakikipagkwentuhan ng joke. Kaya puro serious na lang ang pinag-uusapan namin. Mahirap magbiro, kasi mamaya, akala nya biro mo tutoo, eh. Mamaya babalikan iyon, 'John, you said it like this.' Man, that was a joke!"*

5.7 Mat: *Iba kasi ang joke sa Pilipino saka sa Kiwi.*

5.8: Mat: *They're (Filipinos) fun... they always laugh... they always smile... happy... Kahit wala kayong pera, o kaya wala kayong kakainin, I don't why, they're just happy... You know... I said (to my self) this is weird... kasi, dito, pag wala silang pera... depressed... angry... you know (laughter) Parang galit ba... Even when the whites have money, they're grumpy.*

5.9 Christopher: *... Alam ko, lahat ng Pilipino, nami-miss nila ang Pilipinas. They still take time... financially just to go there.... Just to see them... Ako I try to do that every year, just to stay home and see my family. Hindi ko sya ipagpapalit sa ibang bansa If you say na porke nandito na tayo, a, tapon na...Hindi, hindi natin ipinagpapalit ang bansa natin. Yun pa rin yon. Tanggap natin kung ano sya. Everything, good and bad. Uuwi ka and feel the same. Yong ganon nga eh. Uuwi ka pa rin. Ang dami dyan na alam ko na magse-save ng pera para lang makauwi.*

5.10 Christopher: *Syempre, when you think of it (migration), sarili mo muna ang iisipin mo. Susunod na lang yung epekto sa bansa. Kung may pamilya ka, you think of what's good for your family first. Gagawin mo yon (migration) kasi it's good for your family.*

5.11 Jasper: *Tama ang sinasabi nila... para sa pamilya... sa future ng mga bata. Kasi, meron na kaming mga trabaho, pero ang future ng mga bata. Kami dito kaya kami lumabas sa Pilipinas... Ang purpose namin sa pagpunta dito, kung bakit kami nagpunta sa New Zealand, number one talaga, ang future ng mga bata. Even established ka na don (Philippines), maganda na yung trabaho mo, ang sweldo mo maganda, kaya lang, paano ang mga bata?*

5.12 Justina: *Mas malapit pa din ako sa mga Filipino. Pero nag-mix lang ako don sa kaparehas ko... hindi dun sa mga mapera... kasi, i-look-down ka nila... (laughs). Naramdaman ko man na its like that. Kaya sabi ko sa kanila, ba, mag-stick ako don sa kaparehas ko para di ako makarinig ng tsismis.*



5.13 Weng: *Yan ang unang message ng mga matatanda. Sabi nga sa akin, "Make sure that you don't forget your religiosity that you've been raised to in the Philippines." Sa atin kasi, yong religion is something that keeps us strong. Saka yong values natin evolved from our religion. Yong care sa ibang tao, came from our religion. Yan ang pillars ng religion... so dito, ganon pa rin yan... sa school ng kids ko... pag nakita ko tong taong to, I will trust him right away, kasi alam ko na Kristyano sya. Katoliko sya... definitely, parehas ang values namin. Meron something na bond na nag-aano sainyo agad. You don't get lost even in a foreign land. Yong adjustment mo becomes easier and lighter. Kasi mahirap mag-adjust dahil na-uproot ka, eh.*

5.14 Lolong: *Kasi kaya ako napunta dito dahil sa panalangin ko sa Panginoon, eh. Hindi naman kami yong super-religious, pero me nobena kaming mag-asawa eh. Me sarili kaming nobenang mag-asawa.*

5.15 Annie: *"Yong religious belief natin... that is the only thing that keeps you strong in a foreign land, eh. Lumalakas ang loob mo.... Meron kang natatawagan... kasama yan sa atin ... ang prayer.*

5.16 Weng: *Ang maganda naman kasi dito the children are in a Catholic school. Kasi di mo maaalis yan sa atin... yung personal growth ba nila, the discipline, the values should still be there. Kasi when you are in another country, mahirap yung bata ka pa. Moving into a new culture, moving into a new system, nasisira yung values. Tapos yun ang consideration, ang mga values hindi masisira. One major factor why we moved in a place like this was merong Catholic school just beside here where ma-nu-nurture pa rin yung faith, values and discipline. Continue pa rin yung pinanggalingan ng practices natin.*

5.17 Jessie: *Bahala na, basta ayaw ko na dito.*

5.18 Jessie: *Ganyan lang talaga ang buhay. Iba-iba ang swerte ng tao. Kung oras mo na, oras mo na. Mangyayari yan kahit saan.*

5.19 Sheila: *Ang para kay Pedro ay kay Pedro, at ang para kay Juan ay kay Juan. Di pwedeng mapunta kay Pedro ang para kay Juan, at di pwedeng mapunta kay Juan ang para kay Pedro.*

5.20 Rene: *Ang lahat nang hiniling ko ay palaging Nyang ibinigay kaya kailangan ko ring magbigay ng panata bilang ganti sa mga kaloob na ibinigay sa akin.*

5.21 Jasmine: *Nag-pray ako, privately lang... dinhi sa flat. Laki kasi ako sa debosyon sa Cebu.*

5.22 Sammy: *Di halata ang discrimination nila, kasi alam nila na bawal. Pero makikita mo yan sa trato nila sa'yo. Halimbawa, me sinasabi ka, tapos, sasagot sya, 'What? Say that again please.' So uulitin mo ang sinabi mo, yung talagang babagalan mo na ang pagsasalita, tapos, ganon din, 'What? I can't understand you.' Pero alam mo na naintindihan nya ang sinabi ko. Ba naman, nanggaling na ako sa Europe, don ako nag-MA, pero bakit naiintindihan nila ako don at hindi dito?*

5.23 Berna: *Naglalakad kami, kasi naghahanap kami ng mga 'for rent' flats. Me nagdaang sasakyan lampas sa amin... tapos naramdaman ko ang sakit sa bandang hita ko. Pagtingin ko, me itlog pala na itinaapon sa akin ang mga lokong Kiwing bata sa sasakyan. Ang sakit... Salbahe...*

5.24: Bobby and Jean: *Tumatawid kami tapos, bigla, sumisigaw sila ng f... you sa amin, saka "go home to your coutry". Ang takot namin na baka kung ano ang gawin nila as amin. Kasama pa naman namin ang baby namin. Gusto namin ang Christchurch kasi akala namin, mas mabuti kaysa Middle East kasi pwede kaming maging lantarang Kristyano na walang problema. Nagtrabaho kasi kami sa Saudi Arabia, pero kita mo, di kami nakaranas ng ganyang abuso. Shocking sa amin na tratuhing ganyan sa Christchurch.*

## Chapter 6

6.1 Carmen: *Na-esperience ko as a young girl na mag-offer ng flower(to the Virgin). That was such a beautiful experience ba na I wanted to bring here. Mas maganda ang mga bata ... start with the children offering flowers and be aware of the blessed Mother.*

6.2 Johnny: *Sana naman makita nila na kahit iba tayo, mababait naman tayo, matulungin at may paggalang sa kanila.*

6.3 Magda: *Sabi nila sa akin bakit hindi natin isayaw yan sa programme ng Philippine society. Sabi ko, I have really a plan, but not through the Philippine society (programme) because Sinulog is a ritual dance ... parang panata yan sa Santo Niño. Hindi pa ako used to... na parang gawing part lang sa program. Parang presentation lang sa program. Kaya kinausap ko ang taong ito para gawing festivity na parang kapareho ng ginagawa natin sa Pilipinas. Na kahit saang sulok ng Pilipinas, meron talaga tayong kapistahan.*

## Chapter 7

7.1 Dottie: *Tinutulungan ka ng Diyos na makakita ng mga tamang tao sa tamang panahon na maaaring makatulong sa 'yo.*

7.2 Sarah: *Sa isip ko... Sabi ko, ganyan lang talaga ang buhay, swerte-swerte lang. Iba naman ho kasi ang swerte nya sa akin. Sabi ko sa sarili ko, magbabakasakali ako... bahala na, may-awa ang Diyos.*

7.3 Vannie: *Sabihin natin na maswerte ako. Pero me plano ang Diyos para sa atin na kung minsan di natin alam. Ang Diyos naman ang me hawak ng kapalaran ng bawat isa. Kelangan lang natin na humingi ng tulong sa kanya para mapabuti ang ating buhay. Saka, kelangan din ng tyaga at sipag. Di naman panay swerte lang. Kahit tinutulungan ka naman ng Diyos pero wala ka namang ginagawa, wala ring mangyayari. Basta ginawa ko lang ang dapat at Diyos na ang bahala sa iba.*

7.4 Samantha: *Ang relihiyon natin ay tumutulong matupad at magawa ang mga layunin natin sa buhay. Alam din natin kung saan tayo patungo at kung saan tayo mapapagaling. Panalangin lamang ang maaaring makatulong sating sitwasyon. Saan pa nga ba tayo dadaing kung hindi sa Diyos?*

7.5 Liza: *Wala kang pamilya dito sa Singapore... ikaw lang mag-isa... kaya nga naghanap ako ng community.*

7.6 Liza: *You need to do the things you need to do and leave the rest to God. Magdasal ka... Ipagdasal mo ang ano man na ini-aim mo. Kung di talaga para sayo, di mo makukuha yan. Kung talagang para sayo, makukuha mo. You need to work for it and pray for it."*

7.7 Katrina: *Alam ko na ang pinakasiguradong paraan para maka-meet ka ng mga Pinoy ay sa simbahan.*

7.8 Katrina: *Kasi wala kang pamilya dito ... .. you are on your own... The church provides the family you do not have, as well as nourish your faith. Without faith, malungkot... If I did not get involved (in LM) Labas-labas lang ako at walang direksyon.*

7.9 Katrina: *Kasi ang alaskahan natin eh talagang Pinoy*

7.10 Katrina: *Nasa ICU sya. Walang tao, kaya diretso lang akong nakapasok. Then andon lang sya, parang vegetable na sya sa tingin ko. Sabi ko sa kanya*

*'Di mo ako kilala, pero I will pray for you. Eto ang rosary para sayo.'* Her hand moved to grasp mine. She survived her ordeal. A month later, when I came to visit she was already in the ward with her husband. I told her, 'you do not know me...' but she said, 'I will never forget your voice and I felt the rosary you placed in my hand. Even when I don't know you I will not forget your voice...' And she cried... *Tinitingnan ko ang mga tao sa paligid, yung mga walang swerte.* This is why I volunteer on weekends in a women's shelter and stay overnight to help out those who were not as lucky.

7.11 Katrina: *Dininig ng Diyos ang mga panalangin*

7.12 Julia: How many months *akong di makasimba...* Walang day off... I needed to pray... *dahil hindi sila hospitable tulad natin...* I experienced that we are not treated well as maid in Singapore... *Di ko ini-expect ito.* I also wanted to go to mass. I just came out from the Carmelites, *kaya gusto kong makasimba ...* I just accept that whatever happened to me in Singapore is God's will. I prayed hard to be able to go to mass. *Hinahanap ko talaga ang mass...* I prayed hard... Then, finally, my fourth employer allowed me to go to mass every other day and join church organisations. God is indeed alive in this world. I would advice other migrants to not lose hope and to always pray.

7.13 Nicole: Five years *na very mean yung lalaki. Di ako tumigil sa paghingi ng tulong sa Panginoon. I'm talking to God everyday... malaking tulong... Dininig nya ako. Pag wala kang religion, wala kang direction sa buhay. Me problema ka, saan mo iiyak? O me kaibigan ka, pero matutulungan ka ba nya? May mga pagsubok sa buhay. Di nya ibibigay kung di mo kaya. Tatagan mo ang isip mo at ang puso mo. Don't lose hope.*

7.14 Nicole: *Sa bandang huli me kailangan ka sa kanila...* a good reference letter *para makakita ka ng mas mabuting amo.*

7.15 Nicole: *Di lang naman pera ang dahilan kung bakit ka tumutulong. Kailangan mabait ka sa kanila. Kailangan mong turuan din sila dahil pag hindi, babastusin ka nila. I became strong dahil kailangan. Walang tutulong sayo dito*

7.16 Jessica: *Para makatapos ang mga anak ko ng pag-aaral*

7.17 Jessica: *Bilang pagtanaw ko ng utang na loob sa kanila.*

7.18 Jessica: *Kami po yung mga di-sinuwerte dito sa Singapore. Me ilan sa amin na nadaya ng recruitment agency. Nangako sila ng magandang trabaho pero di naman pala maganda. Yung iba, kapareho ko, di maswerte sa amo. Masama ang ugali ng amo ko. Wala akong day-off. Masama ang bunganga nya. Palagi na lang nya akong pingagagalitan, iniinsulto, at hinahamak. Yung trato nila sa akin parang di tao. Nagdadasal na lang ako, 'Diyos tulungan mo po akong matiis at malampasan ang pagsubok na 'to.'* Tapos sinaktan nya ako. Sabi ko sa kanila, aalis na lang ako. Pero ayaw naman nila akong payagan. Kaya sabi ko, bahala na...may awa ang Diyos. Tumakas na lang ako.

7.19 Sabina: *Di ko naman sya trinato ng espesyal. Kapatid sya ng amo ko kaya amo ko rin sya. Kaya pinagsilbihan ko syang kaparehas nila.*

7.20 Sabina: *Pasalamat talaga ako sa Diyos. Di ko naman hiningi ang ganitong swerte. Di ko talaga inakala ang ganitong kapalaran. Gusto ko lang talagang magtrabaho at makatulong sa pamilya. Sabi ko lang sa sarili ko non, bahala na, basta gagawin ko lang ang dapat. May awa ang Diyos. Di ba sabi natin, 'nasa tao ang gawa, nasa Diyos ang awa?' Di naman nagtatagal ang malas. Kaya ganun lang ... Ngayon okey na ako.*

## Chapter 8

8.1 Perla: *Kapapadala ko pa lang ng panggastos sa eskwela ng mga anak ko kaya panatag ang loob ko ngayon. Alam kong di sila naghihirap.*

8.2 Sabel: *Wala po kaming hilig dyan.*

8.3 Bernie: *Kasi pag di libre, di papasok ang mga Pinay. Pag walang mga girls sa loob, walang kasayaw ang mga customer nila. Kaya kailangang nilang kumbinsihin ang mga Pinay ladies dito na pumasok.*

8.4 DWs teasing repartee: *Kung talagang gusto namin ng Indian, madali yan... madadala lang mga yan sa tingin.*

8.5 DWs teasing: *Delikadong tukso yan... me pamilya kami.*

8.6 Sinta: *Ah, pumupunta lang ako sa Lucky Plaza sa ibang araw o kaya Sabado ng umaga. Iniiwasan ko ang Linggo. Masyadong maraming tao pag Linggo kasi karamihan ng mga domestics, ang day-off nila sa Linggo. Baka mapagkamalan ka nilang domestic worker pag andon ka ng Linggo.*

8.7 Sinta: *Nakakalungkot talaga na ang tingin lang nila sa mga Pilipina ay mga domestic workers lang sa Singapore samantalang malinaw na marami rin namang mga edukado at propesyonal na Pilipino.*

## Chapter 9

9.1 Estela: *Halos naman lahat (ng Filipino) ay talagang palasimba. Yung iba naman may sarili silang intensyon, dahil sa paniniwala nila na pag natapos nila ang Simbang Gabi, matutupad ang wish nila.... Dahil anumang hrap, eto eh dahil hindi madaling mag-survive dito sa Singapore. Akala lang ng mga pamilya natin na namumulot tayo ng pera dito kapag humihingi sila ng pera or sustento sa atin. Dahil nasa ibang bansa po tayo, yun yung... para sa akin ha, yun ang pinakasandata namin, ang pananalig sa Diyos... Kahit na anong mangyari, kahit na anong bagyo, kahit na anong unos, kung talagang may pananalig ka sa Kanya at talagang naniniwala ka ... Luckily yon ang pinapasalamat ko kasi ang kompanya namin di masyadong naapektuhan ng krisis. Kaya lumakas ang pananalig ko...*

9.2 Vanessa: *Yung iba, masyadong maaga kung pumunta... yung iba naman nagagalit kung walang maupuan... Yang mga nasa unahan mga special people yan... Kung ako ang paaalisin magagalit ako. Di ako papayag... Eh parepareho lang tayong pumupunta ng simbahan. Porke taga Philippine embassy sila patatayuin ka. Kaya pumila din sila kasi pag pumupunta kami sa embassy pumipila rin kami. Sinuman ang nahuli, dapat tumayo. Pag nahuli sya, dapt tumayo sya. Ngayon, late sila, dapat tumayo sila. Bakit ba akala nila masyado silang importante?*

9.3: *Nakasiring ka na sa Philippine embassy? Dapat mahiling mo kung paano ninda tratuhon ang mga Filipino duman.*

9.4 Liza: *Pag tumawag ka, di ka bibigyan ng direct answer.*

9.5 Charlie: *Me trabaho sinda dahil samuya pero dae man tama ang trato ninda samuya.*

9.6 Sammy: *Pinagagalitan talaga nila ang mga tao doon na parang mga batang di nakakaintindi at tsaka pinapaghintay nang matagal sa siksikan na lugar. Mga masyado silang mapagmataas.*

### Appendix C: Summary of New Zealand/Singapore migration context

Table Summary of migration context in New Zealand and Singapore

	Context	New Zealand	Singapore
1	Immigration policies and gendered diaspora beginnings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Non-white migration heavily controlled before the 1987 Immigration Reform</li> <li>*Initial Filipino migrant community composed of NZ brides. Skilled migrants with families came after 1987.</li> <li>*Feminised, with females slightly above males.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Filipino community composed mostly of female domestic workers. Increasing demand for foreign domestic workers began in the late 1980s and continued through the 1990s up to the present.</li> <li>*Highly feminised, because of the domestic workers</li> </ul>
2	Migrant rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Skilled/Professional migrants allowed to apply for residency. Unskilled migrants given work permits if needed.</li> <li>*Standardized basic salary scale for labour, regardless of citizenship.</li> <li>*No rule prohibiting migrant marriage, but discrimination seen on non-white brides.</li> <li>* Pregnant non-residents and non-citizens asked to leave to give birth overseas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Skilled/professional migrants allowed to apply for residency</li> <li>*Unskilled migrants like domestic workers not allowed residency or marry residents or citizens</li> <li>*Female unskilled required to undergo annual STD and pregnancy tests – positive pregnancy result ground for immediate repatriation</li> </ul>
3	Migrant mobility / transience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Stable due to residency status and citizenship possibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Majority have a highly transient because of short term contractual status.</li> <li>*Stable for minority skilled / professional workers who become residents.</li> </ul>
4.	Filipino migrant clusters/groupings and sense of identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Family / pre migration social circles/hometown</li> <li>*Regional languages</li> <li>*Class: NZ brides – skilled</li> <li>*education – institutional affiliation</li> <li>*leisure interests like sports</li> <li>*religious organisations, activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Family / pre-migration social circles/ hometown</li> <li>*Regional languages</li> <li>*Class: Employment- skilled / unskilled</li> <li>*education – institutional affiliation</li> <li>*leisure interests like sports</li> <li>*religious organisations, activities</li> </ul>

The discussion on Filipino migrant communities in New Zealand and Singapore have indicated some contrasts and similarities among them, based on several significant factors and particular themes at play in Filipino migration (see table 10.1), which include: 1) host countries immigration policies and gendered diaspora beginnings; 2) the migrant policies/rights granted in each country; 3) migrant mobility/transcience as a result of these policies; 4) the social and religious context of destination country; and 5) the clusterings and groupings of migrants from the Philippines in each country.

*1) Host countries immigration policies and gendered diaspora beginnings*

Migrant destination or host countries have the upper hand in defining the demographics and trajectories of migration directly impacting the beginnings and growth of migrant communities through immigration policies. The gendered beginnings of Filipino migration to New Zealand and Singapore are results of immigration policies framed within specific social and historical contexts. For example, while the general trend of feminisation of Filipino migration occurred in the 1990s,<sup>299</sup> migration of Filipina brides to Australia and New Zealand started in the 1970s, almost two decades earlier. Since non-white migration to New Zealand was heavily controlled before the 1987 Immigration Reform, understandably, most non-white foreign migrants, or

---

<sup>299</sup> It is important to note that the Filipino male labour geared for sea-based migration occurred at almost the same time.



Filipinos in particular, who settled in the country prior to 1987 were spouses of New Zealanders. The gender gap eased a little after 1987 when skilled migrants with their spouses and children were allowed into the country, but a slight feminine edge continues.<sup>300</sup> There had been few occasions when exploitation of improperly documented migrant labour for fruit and dairy farms recruited from the Pacific islands and Asia, including the Philippines, had been featured in the media. Meanwhile, Singapore's encouragement of its women to participate in the work force helped produce a wide base for middle income households. However, the Singaporean women's absence in the domestic space in turn necessitated feminine substitutes into fulfilling women's reproductive labour; a situation which was instrumental in importing foreign domestic workers in Singaporean households, among them, Filipinas.

## *2) Migrant rights granted*

On a positive note, both countries acknowledge the presence of migrants and offer residency status to foreign professional and skilled labour, in contrast to the more restrictive policies of other Southeast Asian countries like Malaysia or Thailand. However, there are important labour policy differences between Singapore and New Zealand. Singapore has yet to initiate legislative measures for equal labour protection between local and foreign workers, and between

---

<sup>300</sup> There were 1,600 male arrivals compared with 1,500 females in 2007 but the slim edge of male arrivals did not have much impact on male/female ratio (Statistics NZ 2007).

migrant skilled and unskilled labour. By contrast, New Zealand legislation has professionalised most of its labour sectors, regardless of gender, skill or nationality, and its labour policies, in terms of hours of work, minimum wage, annual vacation, sick and bereavement leave, etc., are applicable to all workers, citizens and migrants alike. New Zealand policies and system structures have better migrant protection and procedures adjudication than Singapore. In addition, New Zealand's strict skill listings have limited the presence of unskilled migrants except the temporary or seasonal farm workers coming from nearby Pacific islands and Filipino contractual dairy farm workers. In general, New Zealand offers some advantages for migrants compared to Singapore, in terms of rights and fair treatment.

However, New Zealand and Singapore share some similarities in terms of its gendered immigration policies. Singapore has strict state control and monitoring of unskilled female foreign labour, requiring domestic workers to undergo bi-annual pregnancy and STD tests, with those testing positive immediately repatriated. It may be recalled that New Zealand public's perception of foreign brides in the 1970s and 1980s was also discriminatory. At present, only women in a 'relationship' with or married to New Zealanders are 'allowed' to give birth in New Zealand. While not as blatantly offensive as the mandatory bi-annual pregnancy and STD examinations of Singapore, New

Zealand employs a similar pattern of control and monitoring over the reproductive functions of non-resident females. The reproductive function of unskilled female bodies is thus 'officially' regulated through government policies, and its movement over space informally regulated through public opinion.

### *3) Migrant mobility/transience*

Immigration policies also more or less define migrant mobility. The domestic workers have a highly transient status in Singapore. Most of the foreign domestic workers I met in 2008 were gone when I came back in 2010 and 2011. Some of them moved to Malaysia, and vice-versa. In contrast, the professional and skilled migrants from my hometown continue to work in Singapore. There are however, a few long staying domestics because renewal of work visas are allowed and may continue until retirement age.

In contrast to the high mobility of Filipinos in Singapore, Filipinos in New Zealand are less transient. The majority are residents, despite the growing number of contract dairy farm workers and caregivers. Most of the informants and active participants in the community rituals still reside in New Zealand, though a few have moved to Australia and Canada because of the on-going economic recession.

#### 4) *Filipino clusters and groups*

I have explained that the Philippines is diverse culturally and linguistically with about 178 linguistic groups, fourteen of which have more than a million speakers. This has implication for the clusters and groups among Filipino diasporic communities. Because the majority of the Filipino migrants in the South Island, especially Christchurch, are from the Visayas and Mindanao regions, Cebuano is the more commonly used language among Filipino migrant clusters. In Auckland, because of the significant number of people from Luzon (even when they also speak different regional languages), Filipino is spoken in diaphora gatherings. In general, where there are only few speakers of the regional language, like the smaller groups in the South Island,<sup>301</sup> efforts are made to strike a compromise by speaking the national language. This regional cum linguistic clustering is also reflected in the *fiesta* calendar of the Auckland Filipino chaplaincy where a sizeable presence of regional groupings celebrates different *fiestas*.

By comparison, mainly because of the large migrant population of 160,020, with more diverse places of origin, the national language is more necessary in

---

<sup>301</sup> There are some clusters from Luzon island, like Pangasinan, Baguio, Tarlac, Pampanga, Batangas, Laguna, Quezon, Camarines, Albay and Leyte (the province of Imelda Marcos). The Tagalog, Pangasinense, and Waray circles in the South Island are mostly dairy farm workers recruited by employment agencies from provincial agricultural colleges and universities in Laguna and Batangas. There are a good number of veterinary graduates from the University of the Philippines Los Baños, the largest state university in the country in dairy farms working as ordinary farm hands.

group interactions in Singapore compared to Christchurch, which has a predominantly Cebuano speaking population, and even Auckland. However, even when Filipino is more commonly used in Singapore, some languages, like Ilocano, Ilonggo, Kapampangan, Bicol, and Pangasinense are commonly heard from some groups gathered in churches, and Lucky Plaza.

Another dimension of migrant clusterings and connections is linked to educational affiliation. The institutional affiliation of educational attainment is considered a valued qualification, reflecting not just one's knowledge but also a marker of distinction among Filipino migrants. Cultural and social capital relates not only to education per se, but to the prestige of the educational institution that bestowed an academic degree. A degree granted by a well-known academic institution, with a 'who's who' alumni list is an important requirement of admission (and acceptance) among Filipino professional circles. Academics once in while are allowed into elite circles on account of their education. Thus, education as a cultural capital is translatable to class status among Filipinos in New Zealand and Singapore. Also notions of class boundaries, historically in existence from colonial times, remain in choosing friendship circles, and religious organisations though often times disguised as 'social preference.'

There is a three-tiered sense of identification among Filipinos manifested in the diaspora. The first level of identification is the family. The sense of identity among most Filipinos migrants rests on the memory of the family and home “where personal and social meanings are grounded” (Papastergiadis 1998, p. 2). It emerges as the reason for departure and the locus of return.

Linguistic and regional affiliations provide the second level of identification, and the national or Filipino identity is the third level of identity. The different levels of identity are emphasised in different situations. As previously mentioned, regional identities have preceeded the Filipino national identity and the colloquial *Pinoy/Pinay* identity and have been successfully preserved through centuries of colonization. Local languages continue to play central roles in family and regional communication flows. Linguistic code-switching is frequent, if not fully the norm, among Filipino migrants in New Zealand and Singapore. For example, a Filipina bride communicates to her husband and children in English, then calls her auntie and speaks to her in Cebuano, and later interacts with acquaintances coming from other regions in Filipino. This is similar to Filipino migrant practice in Singapore. My conversation over coffee with hometown acquaintances, was in our native language, Bicol, but when citing important quotes from other Filipinos, they switched to Filipino. When answering calls from Singaporean colleagues, they comfortably

switched to English. Code-switching among migrants in Singapore and New Zealand is no doubt driven by necessity, but most do it with a remarkably unconscious ease. In contrast, code-switching in the Philippines is done with some discomfort or resistance, especially among the common *tao*. The use of Filipino or *Tagalog* in Visayas and Mindanao has been for the most part contentious, as it is seen as a tool of dominance by the Manila-based central government. Another factor is that while Filipinos are taught in English, it is never used as a mode of communication or conversation<sup>302</sup> outside the classroom. To do so, from my experience, one risked being teased by one's peer group, or worse, ridiculed by others for being *iba* or different.

The regional and national identities are at times competing identities, as shown in the *Santo Nino-Sinulog fiesta*. However, most Filipino migrants affirm a common national identity, as Filipinos overseas.

---

<sup>302</sup> The exception will be the middle classes and the elite who converse in English (and/or Spanish) among themselves, and use Filipino only when conversing with the common *tao* (such as their domestic workers, drivers, or market vendors). We visited a university classmate's lavish family home (a three storey mansion with a lift, a tennis court, a movie, pool and antique rooms). She had a horde of household servants she talked to in Filipino. When conversing with us, her invited guests/classmates, she switched to English.